This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

+ *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.

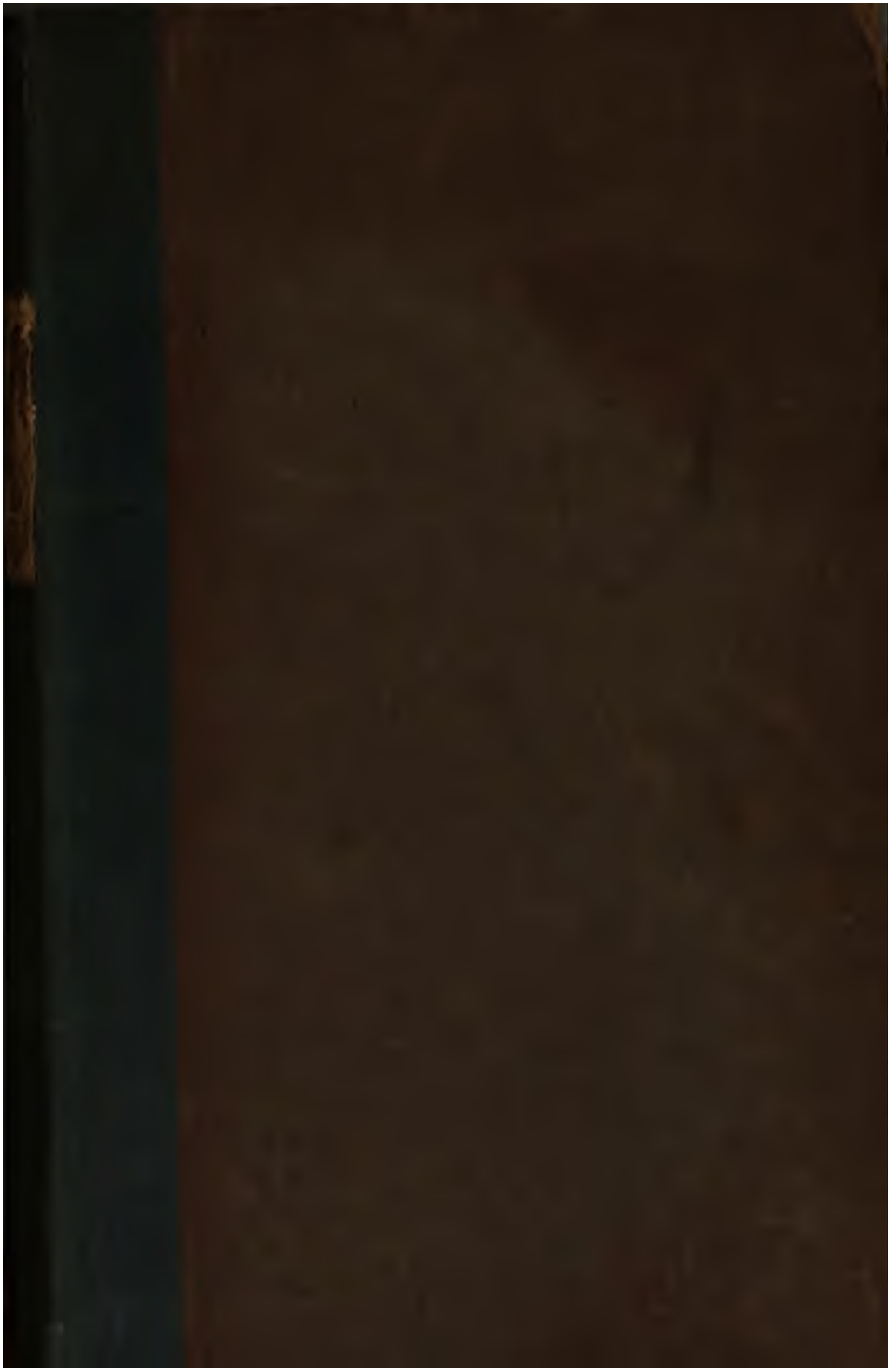
+ *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.

+ *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.

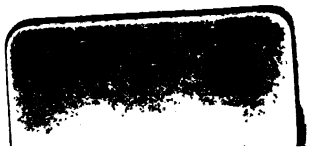
+ *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

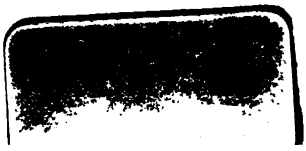
Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at `http://books.google.com/`



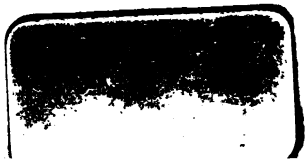
49. 1571.



49. 1571.

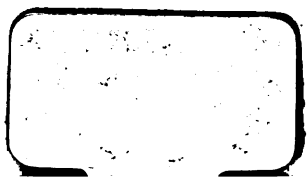


49. 1571.



49. 1571.

49. 1571.



CHARLES VERNON.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
SPOTTISWOODE and SHAW,
New-street-Square.

CHARLES VERNON:

A Transatlantic Tale.

BY

LIEUT.-COL. HENRY SENIOR.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR
LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, & LONGMANS,
PATERNOSTER-ROW.
1849.

CHARLES VERNON.

CHAPTER I.

An indiscriminate and general plunder was the first display of the conqueror's power; and this they carried on in the most brutal manner, rummaging the pockets of even the dead, the wounded, and the dying, and securing each to himself as many watches, and as much money as he could find. They next began to clear the deck of the dead, throwing them very unceremoniously overboard. Two fellows seized Vernon, one taking hold of his arms, and another of his legs. The torment occasioned by thus lifting him by his wounded arm roused him from the senseless state in which the wound on his head had left him: writhing with pain, by a convulsive effort, he gave a sort of kick

at the American, who was lifting his legs, and showed that it was not a dead man whom they were throwing overboard.

"D——n the fellow, I guess he's alive yet, Jem!" said the sailor, dropping his share of the burthen.

"Then he may lie there," answered the other, flinging him down altogether, "till he dies and goes to h——l."

"For God's sake," exclaimed Vernon, "take me down to my cot, and let me have a surgeon, or I shall bleed to death."

A petty officer of the Washington passed him at this moment, and overhearing what passed, called out to a Lascar, who was close by,—

"Holloa, you black scorpion, lend a hand, and heave down this here groaning fellow below;" and the black very reluctantly desisted from plundering to assist Vernon to the cabin, taking care however at the same time to rifle his pockets.

Here he found the surgeon of the privateer, who was a Frenchman, dressing the wounds of the prisoners with more humanity than any of their conquerors seemed disposed to show.

On examining Vernon, he shrugged his shoulders, and said that the ball was lodged in the arm and must be extracted, but that he had not time, nor the patient sufficient strength at that moment to undergo the operation; after binding it up, he left him in his cot in order to attend to his other patients in both vessels, for he said the slaughter had been much more considerable on board the privateer from the crowded state of her deck; though, owing to the disproportion in the numbers of the two ships, this did not tell on the issue of the action.

After they had ransacked the whole ship for plunder, the next business of the captors was to get drunk, which they also did most effectually, rummaging every locker in the cabin where liquor was likely to be kept. Vernon observed one man drink two bottles of porter and one of port wine, one after the other, decanting them successively into a tin quart pot. They then quarrelled in the cabin among the wounded and dying on the division of their booty, and this with so little subordination that one of the

lieutenants knocked down the captain for contradicting him.

The few unwounded sailors of the Flora's crew were handcuffed, and removed on board the privateer, and a drunken sentry was placed over the wounded in the cabin.

Vernon asked for his servant Pompey, but could learn nothing of him — the surgeon telling him that no black man was amongst the wounded, and the Americans that they had not thrown a negro overboard amongst the dead; and that he was not removed amongst the unhurt. He next inquired of Captain Robins, who was lying in a birth opposite, how he was hurt.

"You are not dangerously wounded I trust, captain?"

"No; I believe not, a ball through my thigh — but the bone is not touched, so I hope it will not long lame me; but I feel dreadfully thirsty from the heat and the exhaustion of what I have gone through."

"So do I," answered Vernon, "but I fear these fellows have drank all our wine; you,

sir (addressing himself to the sentry), can you favour us with a drink of wine?"

"Wine, aye! where am I to get it from? We keep nothing but rum on board our vessel, and I guess the stock on board this here vessel is finished already."

"No; there is one locker which has not yet been opened, I don't think any of you observed it," said the captain.

"Hey — and where the d——l is it?"

"Will you promise to bring us a bottle of the claret which you will find there?" asked the captain.

"Mayhap, I will, if there's enough for you and me too, and none of our people come down to share it."

"Search then there under Mr. Williams's, my mate's birth — there the man on the other side who lies senseless, with the wound on his head, underneath his birth."

The drunken sentry staggered to the part of the cabin to which he was directed, but on opening the door of the locker, a most pitious howl issued from within.

"Come out you black varmint," vociferated

the sea robber, dragging out poor Pompey by the leg.

"Oh, why! oh poor me! oh me dead! oh Massa Yankee, no kill me!" yelled forth the terrified negro.

"Avast there, you nigger," said the American, striking him a blow with the flat of his cutlass, "or I will give you something to sing out about. How came you there?"

"Massa Yankee, me 'fraid, me run dere and hide — no able for 'tan on deck — heard de balls cry in my ear as dem fly — see Buckra man fightee, fightee, till him die! Oh, Massa Yankee, Massa Yankee, no kill me now!"

"Silence, you whining fool — go hand out some of the wine there!" and giving a bottle to Pompey to hand to his master, and the other wounded people, he got completely and insensibly drunk on this new store himself.

He was then replaced in his station by the same Lascar who had at first carried Vernon down below: he seemed more tyranically disposed than his predecessor, grumbling at being placed there, and muttering curses in broken English at his prisoners. After finishing the

wine which was left in the locker, he too seemed inclined to sleep, and when Vernon, in the agony of pain, occasioned by his arm, groaned aloud, the Lascar struck him with his sabre for disturbing his slumber. Vernon, enraged beyond endurance at this, flung the empty bottle, the only missive within his reach at his head, fortunately in vain, or it is probable that the drunken wretch would have murdered him.

The privateer, meanwhile, with the Flora in company, manned by the captor's crew, sailed first towards the southern coast of St. Domingo, beating up against the trade wind, and standing in to the land, and again out to sea in each successive tack. In the course of this tedious navigation, just as they entered a deep bay near the rock of Altavela, the look-out man at the mast-head of the Flora gave notice that he had discovered a lofty sail to windward, which, from the appearance of her topsails, the breadth of her yards, and other distinguishing marks, known well to sailors, might be an English man-of-war. Shut in from flight by the projecting headlands of the bay, the privateer endeavoured to elude observation by rapidly taking

in every sail; the crew felt their danger, and never before did they do their work so rapidly. A short time before, each vessel had spread all her canvass to the breeze; now, in a few minutes, nothing remained to attract observation but the bare masts and yards, and black hulls of the privateer and her prize.

How anxiously did the captives watch the approaching sail, as her tall masts rose as the distance decreased! she was crowding all sail right before the wind, her ample studding sails standing out like the pinions of an eagle stooping to her swoop. Now her hull became visible, and her character determined itself at once — she was a frigate, and English, no doubt — she was now about six miles off, and would soon be in a line with them, but she was steering so far to the south that unless she saw and suspected them, her course would bring her no nearer.

What a moment of suspense to all on board the privateer and her consort! Were they to change places, and the captors become the prisoners?

The excitement was overpowering. The fears

and hopes of each party produced the same effect — they could hardly breathe.

"See! she is altering her course! she sees us!" said the boatswain of the Flora, who had been allowed to come on deck by his captors.

"No, she aint though, I guess," answered the American sailor, who stood next to him, and who was looking through a spy-glass. "She don't see us, she is only taking in her starboard studding sail — the wind is drawing round more to the southward — there she goes again right afore the wind." He was right — the frigate passed on her way unconscious of the presence of the two vessels, which with opposite feelings watched her pass, and disappear round the headland.

All sail was again made, but the privateer altered her course southward through the centre of the Gulph of Mexico, towards the Spanish Main.

Day succeeded day without the prisoners being able to conjecture what was their destination; the wounded, meanwhile, were in a dreadful state; the cabin had no windows, and the only fresh air was admitted through a skylight

from above. Now, this the Americans kept closed, under pretence of security against the wounded prisoners rising from their beds and storming the deck. The unwounded were nearly all on board the schooner. The consequences may be conceived: they would be too painful to relate.

The surgeon, however, was humane and attentive, and endeavoured to obtain for the wounded every indulgence in his power. On a re-examination he extracted the ball from Vernon's arm, and encouraged him to hope that the wound would soon heal. Williams, the mate, and one of the seamen died. The others were convalescent.

Vernon forced the captain into conversation. He was a Dutch Creole, apparently of French extraction, and spoke a mixed language, of which French was the staple, and Dutch and English, or rather American, the remainder. His name was Jacques. The sailors called him Captain Jack.

"Captain Jacques," said Vernon to him, "I should have thought that no one but a Barbary corsair would have used prisoners as you and

your crew do; confining us in this stove of a cabin, where fresh air could so easily be admitted; feeding us on salt provisions not fit to throw to a dog, and plundering us of all our clothes."

"I no can help it; if de skylight is left open, I have not men enough to guard you — you kill and wound too many of my crew. Sacre nom de Dieu, vous avez tué vingt, twenty of my crew — and wounded thirty-five. Regardez (showing his hand which was shot through), je suis blessé moi-même — God dam, if I had known you would fight so long I have let you alone."

"Our defending ourselves is no reason, Captain Jacques, for ill using us now we are in your power."

"What you call ill usage? if your men of war caught me how would they use me? Je serais pendu peut-être. As for provisions, we have no other to spare; et pour le pillage, vat you call it — plunder? my men will have it: they would throw me overboard if I tried to stop them. Sacre, vous n'avez pas vu mon lieutenant strike me?"

"And what do you intend doing with us?

I am told you are not steering towards America."

"Mon Dieu! je ne sçais pas. I would have landed you at St. Domingo; but, mon Dieu, I vas too glad to get away from dat island. You know how near dat British frigate catch me dere. I never was so near being catch before; perhaps I may put you on shore on the Spanish Main. Sacre—I want to have done with you;" and after d—g his prisoners in Dutch, French, and English, he reascended to the deck.

The remonstrance, however, somewhat ameliorated their treatment.

A week after this, they could perceive by the motion of the vessel that they had come to anchor, though none of the prisoners knew where they were. Vernon, though forbidden, in common with the other prisoners to leave the cabin, could not resist the inclination to rise, and took an opportunity to gain the deck.

Here a romantic scene presented itself—the two ships were at anchor in a beautiful bay about 200 yards from the shore of what seemed to them, when contrasted with their present misery, an island of paradise.

On each side of the bay a promontory ran out presenting a high caverned cliff to the sea; between these lay a sloping wooded hill, gently rising from the water's edge, winding round which, a rivulet emptied itself into the bay.

A quantity of albatrosses (the largest known species of sea bird, probably the roc of the Arabian Nights) built in the caves of the projecting rocks on each side, and, startled by the rare appearance of visitors, sailed over the ships, as if to reconnoitre them more closely. Spoonbills and other aquatic birds were hovering over the bay, and then darting head foremost into the sea in pursuit of their prey. Not a house or a human being was to be seen, and the fruits of nature flourished unchecked and unpruned by the hand of man.

The whole scene was so new, so beautiful, and so unexpected, that Vernon stood lost in admiration, when he was roughly accosted by the Lieutenant of the Washington, who had been deputed to take charge of the prize.

"Holloa, you Mister, don't you know that it is against orders your being on deck?"

"I wished to see where we were, Mr. Drue,

and shall request the favour of your allowing me to remain here a little while; the fresh air revives me."

"Ay, and may be you'll be trying to swim on shore, though you would make but a baddish business of it even if you got there with your one arm; you would be worse off I'm a thinking, Master Vernon, for vittles than you are now, for all you complains so."

"Well, will you let me remain on deck a short time if I give you my word of honour not to attempt escaping to the shore."

"Yes, you may stay on deck if you have a mind to—and for all I see's about the matter, if Captain Jack put you ashore there it would be a good riddance. I guess we would spare you a few barrels of provisions to serve you for a while."

"Pray what land is that? where are we, Mr. Drue?"

"Eye—why, if you wants to know, it's the island of Blanco."

"Blanco—I never heard of the island before; where is it situated?"

"Not very far from the coast of South

America — they calls it on the chart one of the Antilles, but there is no other island near it — Margarita is the nearest."

"And to whom pray does the island belong?"

"Why, to nobody, it is uninhabited — some of the Spanish drogers, when the've cattle or mules a'board from Barcelona, bound for the islands, sometimes puts in here, to cut grass for their beasts — and I'm a thinking as how Captain Jack 'll have to anchor here to overhaul this here prize, take what's worth having out of her, and put it a'board the Washington, and then send her into some of our ports in the States; and it would be a deal of trouble taking you all of you there. I wish we were rid of you."

Vernon, now unmolested, seated himself on an empty hen-coop, gazing at the uninhabited island, and almost wishing that he and his companions might be landed there, and left to shift for themselves; their wounds were fast healing, and would need little attention; and as he observed herds of goats, and flocks of large birds, he thought that if two or three of

the unwounded sailors and his servant were suffered to land with them, with a fowling piece and ammunition, they would not want food; and he knew that the rainy season was over, so that shelter was unnecessary, except against the sun, and that could easily be constructed from the forest. At all events, anything seemed better than the brutality of the privateer's men; besides the vague longing for a new and wild situation that naturally arose in an active imagination.

His schemes were interrupted by the schooner's coming close alongside of the Flora and anchoring again in that position, when a general examination of the Flora's cargo took place. A great part was transhipped to the Washington, and part, to Vernon's surprise, sent on shore, and carried out of sight into the woods of Blanco, giving him cause to conjecture that the island was made use of as a sort of depot for plunder, and occasionally, if not always, inhabited by some of these sea robbers—a conjecture which was strengthened by observing two mules grazing on the side of the hill, and confirmed by discovering the smoke of a fire

rising above the trees far up the harbour. It seemed to be the Pirate's Isle of Lord Byron in the West Indies.

The Flora had now been twenty-four hours at anchor, and the prisoners were still in suspense as to their fate; nor did it seem that their captors had decided on it, when an unarmed schooner, under English colours, hove in sight, and rounding the rocky promontory, seemed to intend anchoring in the harbour. The Americans immediately hoisted English colours in each of the ships, and the poor stranger fell directly into the trap. She came close to the Washington, and little suspecting what she was, anchored, and then, and not till then, the English colours were pulled down to give place to the American ensign, and a gun fired over her. Escape and resistance were out of the question, and the vessel was yielded without firing a shot. She proved to be a Dutch schooner, the Anna Maria, from the island of St. Thomas, then in the possession of England. She was bound for Barcelona on the Spanish Main, with a cargo of British manufactures, which she intended to exchange there

for mules, and had touched at Blanco to cut a supply of long grass as provender for her intended cargo.

Captain Jacques treated the Dutch captain with great lenity, feeling, perhaps, a fellow countryman's sympathy for him, and after having ransacked it of all the valuable part of the cargo, and nearly all the provisions, allowed him to retain his vessel on condition of taking on board the wounded English. This arrangement Captain Jacques announced to Vernon as a great piece of good nature, adding that he had left a few days' provisions on board, so that he calculated that the Dutch schooner might reach Barcelona, the nearest port, before they were all expended, provided they had a favourable wind.

"We shall not be sorry to quit you, I must confess, Captain Jacques," said Vernon; "but plundered as we are of money, clothes, and every thing else, how shall we subsist then? I alone can speak Spanish of all on board the Flora."

"I no can help dat, you ought to be glad that I do not send you à l'Amérique; or Sacre,

put you on shore here at Blanco. Why, Vanburg here, de capitain, he speak de Spanish."

"Yes, captain, but no English — and we can't speak Dutch."

"Eh bien, you must do vat you can — I vil let dat black Pompey, votre servant, go with you; and Mynheer Vanburg say he vill do all he can for you — so I am rid of you, I don't care."

Accordingly, the next day, the third since they had anchored at Blanco, the wounded prisoners, consisting of Captain Robins, Vernon, the boatswain, and six sailors, together with two cabin boys and black Pompey, who were permitted to accompany them as servants, were removed on board the Dutch schooner, and as comfortably accommodated by Mynheer as his small cabin would allow. Early next morning the three vessels weighed anchor; the Washington and her prize the Flora steering for America, and the Dutch schooner for Barcelona.

Vernon's situation was now far more comfortable, but still he and his companions were all helpless from their wounds, without a

single friend to look up to on their arrival at this strange town, and unable to guess how they should get housed and fed. They knew, too, that it was near the civil war which was raging in Venezuela, though ignorant which party then possessed the town; but then they were out of the hands of the privateer, and this alone kept them in good spirits.

CHAPTER II.

In four days after her departure from Blanco the Dutch schooner arrived opposite the harbour of Barcelona; it was a sultry tropical day, and Vernon remained stretched at his length on the deck, lying on a boat-cloak which the Americans had allowed him to retain. He saw the sun set behind an extended range of mountains, on the Spanish coast, instead of sinking into the wide waste of waters. But as he watched the glowing tints on this nearing coast, which all appeared to welcome with such hope, he mused on what would be the condition of ten wounded pennyless foreigners, put on shore at one of the smaller sea-port towns in England. "Shall we," he thought, "be better off here?"

The Dutchman lay to all night, close to the mouth of the harbour, and entered it the next morning. The town was seven or eight miles higher up a considerable river (navigable for sloops and small brigs) which empties itself

into a large bason, considerably bigger than Falmouth harbour, at the entrance of which are two sugar-loaf islands, acting as break-waters.

The appearance of the whole was new and imposing: the highest of these mountain islands rose like a huge tower, almost perpendicularly from the water, the whole apparently one mass of rock, presenting precipices on every side. The Spaniards, however, had found a way of climbing its summit, as they had erected a sort of look-out post on the top, and had mounted some cannon on one of the sides. The two promontories of the main land were covered with thick wood up to their lofty summits, and so were both sides of the harbour. The water was so sheltered within its circumference, that though the sea ran high without, within it was still as a lake, and gave a perfect reflection of the grand scenery of its shores.

On passing between the two islands at the entrance of the harbour, a signal flag was hoisted from the observatory, at the top of the highest, and answered by the fort at the mouth of the river; from whence a boat put out with two

Spanish custom-house officers, and made towards the schooner.

The custom-house officers behaved with great politeness, evidently sympathised with the unfortunate condition of the English prisoners, and gave them hopes of a good reception at Barcelona. The town, they said, was in possession of the Republicans, but the Royalists, under General Boves, were invading the province; the scene of action was about thirty leagues to the south-eastward of the town, on the frontiers of the adjoining state of Cumana, where a Republican army was opposed to the Royalists, and several sanguinary actions had taken place, in which the victory was claimed by both sides. They considered, however, the town quite safe for the present, and added, to the no slight joy of the Flora's crew, that there were two English merchants at Barcelona, men of consequence in the place, and intimate with the governor.

An embassy to these merchants was immediately determined on. Mynheer Vanburgh obligingly undertook to see them, and describe to their countrymen the condition of his pas-

sengers. Vernon commissioned him to borrow money from the English merchants to support the wounded crew on shore, and to hire a house.

The rest of this evening Vernon remained on deck, charmed with the scenery to which chance had brought him. The lake-like bason was glowing with the richness of a tropical sun-set; the mountain island rock, crowned with its small fort, was reflected in the still water which, in some places, was just sufficiently rippled to produce a waving outline. The darker shadows of the wooded promontories on each side contrasted well with the then purple colour of the rock. On the right shore were the bowery huts of an Indian village. The water was covered with pelicans and flamingos, now diving for their prey, and then rising suddenly and darting again after shoals of fish. Three other brigs rode at anchor near the Anna Maria, but apparently had no one on board. Now and then a light fishing canoe approached, but after gazing at the strangers the Indians paddled past with rapid strokes.

The next day Vernon and his companions

anxiously watched for the return of their ambassador; at length he came in a splendid launch belonging to the governor; his report was more favourable than the most sanguine of his passengers expected. The merchants were two young Scotchmen, Messrs. Buchan and M'Lean, junior partners, or rather agents, of a mercantile house in Trinidad, which was connected with the firm of Playfair and Co., Glasgow. They had received Captain Vanburg with hospitality, expressed sympathy for their fellow countrymen, and promised to lend what money they could get together to the captain of the Flora on his bills on Jamaica. They then introduced him to the governor of the town, who at once gave permission for the landing of the Flora's crew, and suggested that a large house, then vacant, in the principal square of the town would be a suitable residence for so large a party. This house had accordingly been taken: it was unfurnished and dilapidated, but Mr. Buchan promised to procure all the furniture which was indispensable. The Dutch captain, anxious to be relieved from his passengers, had prevailed on the governor

to send his launch in charge of an inferior officer to take the party on shore.

The Americans had relieved Vernon and his companions from the traveller's greatest trouble — the looking after baggage, so all were soon stowed away in the capacious boat as well as their different wounds would admit of; some lying down, and the rest seated. The launch had (as a governor's boat should have) an awning over it, to protect its inmates from the vertical sun, and, rowed by ten stout negroes, proceeded at the rate of about three miles an hour, which, considering its size, the climate, and the current, was hard work.

The mouth of the river was protected on each side by a small fort, garrisoned by some thirty or forty men, and mounting two or three old looking cannon.

The sentry in front of the nearest fort, on the launch turning the point of land so as to open the river, challenged the party by the watchword of "Qui viva," the officer in charge answered, "Los patriotes;" and then, on a signal from the commander of the guard, the boat proceeded onward.

The sentry was a tall, dark-complexioned man: his only symptoms of uniform were a plume of red feathers and a tri-colour cockade. He held a long rusty sabre in one hand, and a short pipe in the other. The rest of the guard were lying or sitting down under an open shed, either sleeping or smoking. Their arms, which consisted of muskets or swords, were piled up in the corner of the shed. This was the principal defence of the town towards the sea.

Passing between these forts, the launch entered the river, which was about thirty yards broad, and ran in a deep strong current, little influenced by tide. The water was level with the banks, and in many places overflowed them. On each side was a deep, dark, impenetrable forest; the tropical trees, growing on the very edge of the water, spread out their giant arms so as nearly to meet over head; the minor race of brushwood and long reedy grass flourished beneath them, with a luxuriance unknown in Europe. The various species of vines and other climbers, hanging from tree to tree, were interwoven so as to resemble a

green tapestry, falling in folds from the tops of the highest trees down to the water's edge. Here and there, from the enormous limbs of two rival silk-cotton trees, vines, of a sort resembling Clematis, or "old man's beard," had met across the river; their long tendrils, first swung together by the wind, had united, forming a green inverted arch over the water, and the junction, once accomplished, had woven together a natural awning. Here, midway, suspended over the water, the tailor-bird had hung her nest; the smallest race of monkies, her most dreaded foe, not daring to cross so frail a bridge, so that the parent bird might be seen in her cot, securely swinging in the breeze, and safe from every enemy but man. These climbers render the forest impassable, their rope-like vines being so twisted together from tree to tree, that an Indian, in attempting a new track, is obliged to cut his way before him with a sharply-edged cutlass, and, even then, can make but slow progress.

Whenever the thick foliage would allow space for the sunshine to reach the banks, numerous alligators were seen basking: if the

boat approached very near, they took to the water. The largest were about ten feet in length. The Spaniards say that they never attack a man unless they find him in the water, and not then unless very hungry. Flocks of parrots and parroquets clustered on the trees on each bank, screaming out their discordant note of alarm; and wild ducks, spoonbills, and gauldings rose in multitudes before the bows of the boat, fanning the still air with the flutter of their long pinions.

Half way up the river there was an open track, or road, to the right, leading to some cleared and inhabited country to the southward. Here there was a small pier, and the remains of what appeared to have been a blockhouse or fort, now in ruins, and ungarrisoned.

After passing this point, a bend of the river led to a change of scene. Large openings in the woods, or clearings, began to appear, in which herds of cattle, horses, and mules were feeding. All looked untamed; indeed, they were all but wild, the Spaniards only catching them once a year, securing those that they want, branding all increase with the pro-

prietor's mark, and then turning them loose again, the pastures being common property.

Further on, the forest disappeared, and the banks were edged with cocoa groves, sugar-cane fields, and some vegetable gardens; but no country houses, only a few small cabins. The town of Barcelona was now in view; and, after passing under a large awkward wooden bridge, the launch was made fast to a wharf about the centre of the town.

The Dutch captain landed to announce the arrival of his passengers, and to contrive how wounded and crippled men could be removed to the house which had been taken for them, and stood far from the wharf.

In the meantime, Vernon and his companions remained in the boat, attracting the attention of a crowd of the townspeople. Two-thirds of this assemblage seemed of a mongrel race, a mixture between the original Spanish blood, the Indian, and the negro; the other third were of the origin from which these had sprung, either pure white, Indian, or negro, the last, the unmixed negro blood being the rarest variety, showing that the slave trade had long

ceased. This motley crowd stood in groups on the wharf, the men smoking and wondering who the European strangers could be, the women alone expressing pity for those who seemed suffering from their wounds.

At last Captain Vanburg returned, accompanied by Mr. Buchan, who brought with him some men carrying chairs on poles, and hammocks, which were afterwards slung on the oars of the boat. Carriages were a luxury unknown in Barcelona, and this mode of transport was substituted: it answered very well. Vernon was put into a hammock, and the wounded who were not able to walk were taken on chairs. Thus they were carried through several long ill-built and ruinous streets to their new abode, a stone house standing at the corner of a large square. Vernon, weak and exhausted, both in mind and body, rejoiced to find a hammock prepared where he could obtain refuge from all his ills in the sound sleep, which fatigue had insured him.

The next morning, he was requested by Captain Robins to assist in making arrange-

ments as to the means of lodging and subsisting their large party, consisting, as has been already stated, of twelve persons, eight of whom were wounded. The habitable part of the house contained three large rooms opening into each other, without any inner doors: they were on the first floor, the ground floor being ruinous, and usable only as a kitchen. There were no chairs or tables, and for bedsteads were substituted mats on the tiled flooring, or hammocks hung from the ceiling or wall. Mr. Buchan advanced what money he could command to Vernon, in exchange for his bills on M'Kenzie, but it was insufficient to last long unless used with the greatest economy. He had hired for his friends an old mulatto woman as housekeeper and market woman; and Vernon, with whom alone she was able to converse, and who with difficulty comprehended her mongrel Spanish, installed her in charge of their kitchen. With some difficulty two large iron pots were obtained for a cooking apparatus, a few plates, and knives and forks, were added, some earthenware cups, and a great many calabash and cocoa-nut shells which answered

the same purpose. Tough lean beef was plentiful and cheap, and so were cassada bread and yams, and in time coffee and sugar, and some sour wine, were added to their luxuries. The cook of the Flora was aided in his vocation by Pompey, and all the slightly wounded assisted those who were more helpless.

An open virandah ran round the front of the house, separated from the rooms by folding doors and unglazed windows. This virandah overlooked the large public square, and here Vernon spent a great part of his day: he could from it see every thing that was going on in the square, and the square was the heart of Barcelona. The public buildings were all there. A large church or cathedral, two monasteries, with a public assembly room between them, a court of justice, with a military guard-room on its right hand, and a nunnery on its left, and a large building, once a jail, but now used as a barrack, were the most prominent objects. Some few cannon, mounted on most unwieldy carriages, were ranged in front of the guard-room, and in the centre of the square, from a lofty flag-staff, the tri-colour Venezuelan flag dis-

played its red, yellow, and blue banners. Numbers of the Spanish clergy, distinguished by their robes and peculiar black hats, were constantly passing.

Each morning at sunrise there was a muster of all the armed force in town, attended by the citizens as well as by the regular soldiery. Sometimes troops were paraded previous to going out to the scene of action on the frontier of the province, or others on their return from thence, and at all times a guard of two hundred men was mounted at the barracks.

The military parade over, the square next became a public market, where beef and vegetables, and occasionally some poultry or fish, were offered for sale; but it was ill supplied, and soon over. In the afternoon parties of the upper classes of the inhabitants might be seen paying visits at the better looking houses, the ladies always on foot, and under the shade of an umbrella, carried by an attendant; the men, generally on ponies or mules from which they never dismounted, riding into the lower rooms of their friends' houses, drinking wine, smoking cigars, and hearing news without

getting off — the street doors being always open; indeed very often there was no door whatever in this part of the house.

In the evening, Vernon generally received a visit from one or other of his friendly merchants who told him the news of the day, or brought with him some present of fruit or wine, and did all that he could to cheer his countrymen.

A week passed on in this way without any event further than that Vernon, and the wounded captain and sailors were all fast recovering, under the care of a Spanish surgeon of the town, who had been sent to them by the governor.

"His Excellency," said the Spanish surgeon, "would do his utmost to serve you."

"Was he ever in England?" asked Vernon.

"No; he is a Creole from the Caraccas, where he once owned much property, but he early espoused the patriot cause, and four years ago, when that province was overrun by the Royalists, he had to fly to Trinidad, where he was so hospitably treated by some merchants, your countrymen, that he loves the English almost as much as he hates the Royalists."

"Civil war," answered Vernon, "is, I know, a bitter war; but has the mere loss of property made your governor so vindictive?"

"No, poor man, not a year ago he lost his only son, the pride of his old age, who was seized when sent to the Royalist camp with a flag of truce, and murdered as a rebel and a spy. This has exasperated Don Diego's hatred of the Royalists to an excess akin to madness; it shows itself whenever a Royalist falls into his hands; at all other times he is kind and gentle, but then his whole character changes."

A few days afterwards news arrived of a signal success said to have been obtained by the patriots, and all kinds of public demonstrations were made in honour of the victory. The guns in the square were fired, and a religious procession of priests and nuns carried in a litter a figure of the Holy Virgin, which always goes from the convent to the cathedral to attend a high mass. On the return of the procession, the square and principal streets were crowded by men of all ranks and colours, who filled the air with "Vivas," while in the virandahs all round stood showily dressed wo-

men waving their handkerchiefs as their shrill voices joined in the shouts from below.

Vernon was now sufficiently recovered to be able to walk a short distance, and, leaning on the arm of his friendly surgeon, who was to introduce him, he moved slowly through the crowd in the square towards the governor's house, situated in one of the main streets.

It was impossible not to sympathise with the multitude: joy and grief are both reflected almost unconsciously by us all, but especially by the young, and Vernon found himself joining in the vivas which rang around him.

He found the governor at home, and was kindly, even cordially received. He looked some sixty years old, though in reality not more than fifty; he was tall and thin, with a stooping carriage; his hair grey, his face, and especially his forehead, covered with the lines of care and time; his expression, when silent, was sad and severe, but when he spoke a smile redeemed its sternness. He had a sort of slight stammer or impediment, often accompanying a quick temper.

"I wish your Excellency joy," said Vernon, "of your victory, which I hope will secure this province from invasion."

"Thank you, my young friend," answered the governor; "this Republic (laying an accent on the word) is I hope for the present safe from the horrors, the pollution, of that wretch Boves and his brigands; but we can have no security till the whole of our country is free, and every Spanish Royalist exterminated; the war has already cost me all that rendered life valuable, and I live only to see my country delivered; but I ought not to intrude my private griefs on you, Captain Vernon. Can I do any thing for you? You do not know how happy it would make me to serve you, and repay in part the kindness which I received from your countrymen, when the Royalists (may they die like dogs!) hunted me from my home."

Vernon promised to make use of the governor's offer if he should find he required it, and took his leave, much pleased with his new friend; for such he felt assured that Don Diego intended to become.

Two days after these rejoicings a different scene was enacted in the square. Very early in the morning the largest of the cannon was dragged forward by a party of artillerymen to another side of the square, and pointed at an open space, beyond which the old walls of the former jail (now a barrack) rose to a great height.

A party of soldiers next moved out from the barracks, and wheeling forward their flanks formed three sides of a square. The gunners then loaded the cannon with grape shot.

For an hour nothing further took place, but the tolling of the great bell of the convent. At length four figures issued slowly from the church door on the other side of the square, and advanced between two lines of soldiers towards the cannon. They were a bishop, a colonel, and two field officers on the royalist side, who had been among the prisoners captured in the recent successes of the patriots. The others had been put to death at once. These being reserved to afford an exhibition to the Barcelonese, had been confined for the

last three days in separate cells. Each victim, excepting the bishop, was attended by his confessor. The three wretched officers seemed to have lost all firmness and self-command; their knees trembled as they were led along.

Not so the bishop: with a calm countenance and firm step he marched forward, and, with a look which seemed to express contempt, both for his executioners and his companions, he placed himself opposite the mouth of the cannon, and stood with his right side about four yards from the muzzle. The colonel was made to kneel down beside him, and the two other prisoners were placed close behind them, so that the gun enfiladed them all. The bishop stood with his arms folded, a mixture of pride and enthusiasm on his countenance, while the republican officer commanding the military read the warrant for their execution.

Many of the spectators looked more frightened. Vernon, in his virandah, was very near, and watched the old man's face as the match was applied to the touchhole of the cannon; but the gun, rusty and ill-primed, did not go off. Not a muscle of the bishop's face moved;

Vernon did not think that he winked as the priming flashed harmless before his eyes.

The gun was again primed; and, during this awful interval, the bishop's fortitude never failed him, while his companions seemed fainting with terror.

The second time the cannon went off, and, under a shower of grape shot, the four prisoners were lifeless in a moment. Shouts of of vivas rose from the crowd, and the bodies were taken to the church for burial. Sawdust and sand were heaped over the blood, and an hour afterwards not a trace remained. The square was filled with market people, and fish and vegetables were ranged in baskets for sale on the very spot where man's blood had been so lately shed.

On the afternoon of the same day Vernon dined at the governor's, where he met several officers of the republican army. The governor's daughter, now his only child, plain and sickly looking, and more than thirty years old, was the only lady present. The dinner was unpretending, and the guests talked of little but the events and prospects of the war.

The execution of the morning was lightly mentioned, as a thing of common occurrence; and even Donna Beatrice, though she crossed herself, and whispered a short prayer for the souls of the victims, seemed to consider the event as a painful necessity, a just retaliation which the cruelties of the royalists had brought on their own heads; and she was evidently both surprised and hurt at the view which Vernon did not entirely conceal.

On all other subjects his host's conversation was pleasing; and, dependent on them as he was for educated society, he felt a growing interest both for the old man and for his daughter, and esteem and gratitude mixed with the pity with which he had at first regarded them.

Don Diego was intelligent and kindly, and his daughter seemed clever and amiable; but bowed down with grief and anxiety, she only delayed entering a convent until her father could better spare her.

CHAPTER III.

WEEKS passed on, during which Vernon gradually recovered, and both he and the captain and crew of the Flora became anxious to obtain a passage to Jamaica, or to any of the West Indian islands, but none offered. There was no shipping in the harbour; the unsettled state of the country had put a stop to commerce. Removal seemed for the present impossible, and Vernon spent most of his evenings at the governor's, hearing every day some new and often contradictory report from sick and wounded officers, who were continually returning from the patriot army.

Sometimes the royalists were said to be utterly dispersed; then fresh troops had joined them, and they were advancing through the province of Cumana towards Barcelona. In one respect only these rumours did not vary — that of the cruelties attributed to the enemy's troops. Stories of the wanton slaughter of the inhabitants of whole districts, in which

women and children were said to have been murdered, with every additional atrocity which man's fiendish nature ever imagined, infected Vernon with some of the horror in which his friends held their opponents.

These frightful tales were no doubt many of them false, and still more exaggerated. The real conduct of both parties in this war was much the same; and not, perhaps, worse on either side than that which civil war, waged by undisciplined and ill-officered troops, will always occasion: the ravages and cruelty of one party were retaliated by the other, and murder begat murder.

Fresh rumours of the advance of the enemy soon prevailed, and anxiety and terror became universal. The royalist army was supposed to be nearly equal in numbers to any force which the republicans had to oppose to it, and was certainly comparatively far better armed; both, however, resembled bands of robbers rather than civilised armies.

At length the enemy was reported to be within two or three days' march of the pass of the Boca, an opening in a range of hills about

thirty miles to the south-east of the town, overgrown by thick pathless woods. The Barcelona river flows through the defile, over a rocky bed confined by precipitous banks. A mule track, which threads this pass, crossing and recrossing the river in several places, is, or at least was then, the only communication open between the province of Cumana, then partially held by the royalists, and Barcelona; and on the defence of this pass the hope of safety to the town seemed to depend. A body of the republican troops had been stationed for some weeks on their own side of this defile; and reinforcements of fresh levies, and what light guns they could command, were daily sent forward to its defence.

The governor, who perhaps overvalued Vernon's experience, urged him to accompany the garrison of the town on their march to the pass. He offered him the command of a body of Indians, as the jealousy of the Creoles would have prevented their serving under an Englishman; and promised him the two best horses that could be found in the town. Vernon's military instincts were roused by the note of

preparation. The safety of his kind friends in Barcelona, and, perhaps, of his shipmates of the Flora, might depend on the issue of the contest; for little mercy or discrimination was to be expected from Boves and his army if the town were stormed and pillaged; and then he had heard only the patriot side of the question, and believed in the justice of that cause. So, urged rather by the number of motives, than by any one of them, he consented.

The next morning at day-break, he attended the muster of the patriot troops in the square. The governor had kept his word, and provided him with two excellent horses; his personal equipment consisted of a sabre and pair of pistols; he wore no uniform, and his whole camp equipage consisted of an Indian hammock of net grass, a blanket, and a small valise, which were carried on his second horse, led by a half-bred Indian, Jose by name, who had been attached to him by the governor's order. Pompey was to have followed on a mule; but he did not make his appearance, his dislike of danger of every kind, but especially that from fire-arms, sufficiently accounted for his absence.

How different this is, thought he, as he looked at his own dress and arms, from the way in which I took the field a year ago — and his mind wandered back to Spain. His regiment, and his old friends of the Third Division, and his former trusty batman, John Adams, with his well-loaded mule, rose in contrast, as he looked at his wild attendant, and his scanty equipment. The light heart, high spirits, and unembarrassed conscience of his former life, differed still more strongly from his present state of mind. He tried to alleviate if he could not stifle his regret by the excitement of the scene, So he joined the governor, who, dressed in a blue uniform with silver epaulettes and red facings, was reviewing the troops.

The infantry were of all complexions, from the European to the African, but chiefly of the intermediate copper-coloured shades, dressed without any distinction of uniform, excepting their tri-colour cockades, and an occasional red plume of feathers in their straw hats. Some were armed with muskets, with or without bayonets, some with pikes, others only with pistols stuck in their girdles, and a cutlass, a

hatchet, or even a club stick in their hands. Most of them smoked cigars in the ranks.

The few cavalry (not more than one hundred were on the ground) were mounted on horses, ponies, or mules, and armed, some with swords, and some with pikes or lances. When ordered to move forward in line half the mules chose to retrograde, and kicked up in the faces of the rear rank.

The poor Indians, who were always compelled to fight on the side of the party who governed the province where the villages were situated, and were usually hanged by the other party if they fell into its hands, presented the most singular sight.

They all had had blankets given to them as part of their military equipment; but not knowing well what use to put them to, had cut a hole in the centre just large enough to admit the head, and then let the blanket hang down all round them like a cloak. Arrayed in this sort of toga, they presented the most uniform dress of any of the troops on the parade; the uniformity, however, in no way extended to their arms. Some had fire arms, some spears,

others cutlasses or clubs, and bows and arrows. They looked, as no doubt they were, reluctant soldiers in a cause which no way concerned them.

"Here is your charge, Captain Vernon," said the governor, as they rode in front of the Indian muster; and then calling Maoro, their head man or chief, forward, inquired as to the numbers present. The party consisted of nearly two hundred men, only half the force which the governor had ordered to attend. Maoro excused himself by saying that he brought all the men whom he could find, all, he said, who were not sick, or absent on hunting or fishing expeditions. Vernon was then introduced to the chief and his tribe as their leader. He could not help expressing to the governor the little satisfaction he anticipated in leading into action unwilling followers who would, he was sure, take the first opportunity of deserting, if indeed quitting a compulsory service could so be termed. He was told in answer, that such was too likely to be the result, especially if the army they were attached to met with a reverse, but that in their present circumstances

the patriots could not afford to lose even this doubtful aid.

Vernon could not draw back, on the very morning that the troops whom he had volunteered to join were marching out with the certainty of immediate action, and distasteful as his present position was to him, inaction was still less tolerable, and so he rode on with the governor's staff at the head of the column of march. Their road lay through alternate patches of cleared and cultivated fields, or of forest and savannah : it was very bad, and very narrow; their progress was checked by having to cross creeks by long wooden bridges, in so dilapidated a state that they were often glad to seek for a ford rather than trust the weight of man and horse to their rotten planks. Sometimes they encountered morasses which had once been traversed by a road formed of trunks of trees laid side by side, called in British North America "a corduroy road." These trunks had decayed and sunk into the black mud beneath, and now it was with difficulty that they could be crossed even by infantry, and no horses but those of the country,

accustomed to pick their way and instinctively to avoid the rotten places, could have got through.

The morning sun was hot, the air sultry and oppressive, and Vernon felt faint as, mile after mile, he encountered the sun's rising power and toiled along the unsheltered road. Nor was his route more tolerable when it lay through the forest; here, in the shelter of the trees, swarms of large black gallinipper mosquitoes lay in wait for their victims, and, flying out, covered man and horse with their clouds.

At last, about sunset, after a march of twenty miles, in which the difficulties and annoyances appeared to Vernon to double the real distance, the troops were halted at a small village. It afforded some shelter for the officers, but most of the men had to pass the night in the open air; provisions of dried beef and cassada bread were distributed, and the motley camp soon sunk to sleep.

The next morning, at day-break, there was a general muster preparatory to continuing their march. Vernon, as he had expected, found his band of Indians much diminished. He could not count one hundred and fifty of the

two hundred who should have been present; the others had no doubt escaped in the night, in the hope of getting back to their homes. Amongst the missing was the chief's son Eoroma, and when this was reported by Vernon to Don Diego, he was desired to assure the chief that he, the governor, hoped that his son and the other deserters would be intercepted before they reached their village; and that then they would be hung without mercy.

Vernon neither liked the message, nor the way in which it was given; but his military habit of silent obedience under arms prevented his making any remonstrance; besides, he hoped that the poor Indians might not be retaken.

The next day's march was through much the same sort of country, until towards evening the troops approached the hills, and following the curves of their bases for several miles, a sudden turn brought them to a small hamlet, about a mile in front of the pass.

Here they found encamped the main body of the republican troops; the few houses of the village were occupied by the superior of-

ficers, or used as stores for provisions and ammunition; and temporary huts, affording some slight shelter from the sun or rain, had been hastily constructed by each corps, according to its own pleasure. To Vernon's military eye, all looked confusion and disorder. "No quartermaster-general here," thought he, as he looked about for a spot whereon to place his own followers; "or if there was such an officer, I do not think any of the leaders would obey him." So he consulted his old Indian chief, Maoro, and selected a rising ground where there was plenty of brushwood, and a long reedy sort of wild cane. The Indians soon housed themselves, constructing a hut something like a large bee-hive for Vernon, to whom they already began to feel attached from the manner in which he had attended to their wants, and claimed for them their fair share of provisions. The next morning he was aroused from his sleep by Maoro, who came to him in the utmost terror and grief to say, that his son Eoroma, with one of the other fugitive Indians, had been retaken, and brought back to the camp during the night, and that they were

now lying bound hand and foot in the charge of the main guard. Eoroma, he said, had only just been married, when he was compelled to leave his home.

"His mother and young wife have now," said the chief, "no one left in the tribe to hunt or fish for them, and so my son went back to them; and now, Captain, they will hang him if you do not stop them. But let them beware; if they touch a hair of his head, then every Indian here will revenge him, and fight against you when the day of battle comes."

Vernon hastened to see what he could do. He feared that any appeal to the humanity of Don Diego must fail, but he hoped that he could show that it would be bad policy to hang the son of the chief, and so insure the disaffection of all the tribe who remained; and by urging this argument he succeeded. On the plea of obliging Vernon, although in reality from fear of worse consequences, the two prisoners were pardoned and released; and from that moment the old chief, and the whole tribe, were eager to show their devotion to their benefactor. They were lukewarm soldiers in the

general cause, but they were ready to do any thing, or risk any thing, to serve Vernon.

For several days the republican troops remained inactive in their camp; intelligence came of daily encounters between the royalists and their opponents on the other side of the pass; but no decided blow had been struck, and the leaders of the Barcelona forces seemed satisfied to remain on the defensive. Vernon employed this opportunity in exercising his Indians, rather to satisfy himself as to what service might be expected from them in action, than from any hope of improving their discipline. He found, as he anticipated, that they would be of little or no use if called upon to act as a united and compact force; they had neither arms nor habits to adapt them for such a trial; but he thought they might prove useful allies as a detached body of skirmishers, and his military experience had proved to him how such a guerilla force may harass an invader.

This interval of calm reflection made Vernon doubt whether his impulses had not again misled his judgment, when he consented to join the patriots, and mix himself in a war in which his

country had not authorised him to draw his sword; but he felt as a duellist does who has suffered himself to be placed, weapon in hand, in front of an opponent with whom he is conscious that he has no just quarrel.

He had soon, however, other things to attend to than casuistic questions as to the lawfulness of taking part in a foreign civil war. Early one morning, a horseman galloped in to say that the royalists were in force, that they had driven in the patriot outposts, and, when he last saw them, were about three miles from the Cumana entrance of the pass.

The patriot army immediately mustered to meet them, an advanced guard was sent forward, and Vernon, with his Indians, was ordered to join a flanking party of about three hundred men, commanded by a colonel with whom he was not acquainted. On arriving at the opening of the pass, Vernon was to ascend with his Indians the high ground on the left side of the Boca, while the patriot colonel with the other skirmishers climbed the heights on the opposite side. They were to endeavour to precede the main body, which was encumbered by cannon,

and to gall the enemy, and protect their own party by firing down from the heights.

Leaving his horse in charge of Jose, his Indian attendant, Vernon scrambled up the steep hill side; now pushing through brush-wood or tangled vines, then climbing over rocks and chasms, and sometimes bewildered by losing all points of direction amidst high trees. He could not have found his way, or have got through its obstacles, but for the assistance of his Indian followers, who crept through jungles and clambered up precipices with the instinct and activity of wild animals. With their guidance and assistance, he gained a promontory overlooking, within long musket range, the pass which wound round its base. Here the Indians hid themselves in the bushes, while Vernon and Maoro crept forward to some Palmetto trees which rose from the very edge of the promontory immediately over a reach of the pass. Long and anxiously he looked down, but all was still and silent — no living combatant was to be seen, though the quick eye of Maoro discovered the bodies of three men and a mule lying close together, half covered by the

waters of the river into which they had fallen, proving that some conflict had just taken place, but it was impossible to judge to which party these fallen soldiers had belonged, or whether the republicans were advancing or retreating. After a suspense of some minutes, which seemed to be hours, he heard a few dropping musket shots higher up the pass.

"That must be the advanced guard of our friends," said he to Maoro: "they have passed us, and are engaged with the first skirmishers of the royalists; but as yet they have encountered no numerous opponents. Hark! — still only single shots, and at intervals. Ha! that was a volley! now they are opposed by a larger force."

Maoro did not reply, but listened attentively, and hearing sounds which Vernon's duller ear could not detect, whispered —

"The soldiers are running back."

In a minute afterwards they saw a party of about thirty men, evidently in flight and disorder, running down the pass, and as they neared and turned the angle of the road where it wound round the base of the cliff on which he

was standing, scaring away two black vultures, which rose slowly and reluctantly from the bodies of the dead men or the mule, Vernon was grieved to recognise the fugitives as republicans, and some of the very troops which had marched out with him from Barcelona.

In a few seconds a small party of royalists followed, much scattered and in hot pursuit. As the chase passed rapidly by, some shots were fired down on them from Vernon's Indians, without appearing to take any effect; and they rushed on, and were soon lost at a turn of the pass further down. For a few minutes all was again silent; then a sound of voices and the trampling of horses, and then a body of cavalry were seen slowly picking their way over the impediments of the road, as they wound their way down the pass; then followed long files of infantry, marching in a straggling, disorderly manner, with the relaxed step of tired men, and frequently falling out of their ranks to drink of the stream which was flowing on beside them, and then limping along, in a sort of half-run, to regain their

places. This was evidently the main body of the royalists.

Vernon could not doubt that they would soon encounter his friends, who must be advancing up the gorge; and that the struggle, when they met, must be short and decisive. Hemmed in by the cliffs on each side, the shock of the meeting would resemble that of combatants in the lists of a tournament; and whichever side first flinched must be driven back in irretrievable defeat. He ordered his Indians to keep concealed, and not to throw away their small stock of ammunition in a useless fire on the long lines of royalists who continued to straggle past below his ambush. Probably the Indians felt no desire to take an active part, and would joyfully have witnessed the destruction of both parties. The fall of every White, whether royalist or patriot, was to them one tyrant removed.

Minutes passed on, and still there was no indication of the expected conflict. Nothing to be heard but the hum of voices from the long straggling column beneath, mixed with the brawling of the stream, or the angry voice of

some leader urging on his tired followers, and ordering them to close up their ranks.

Vernon's suspence became intolerable, and he was on the point of withdrawing from his concealment and rejoining the patriots, when the booming sound of cannon shot was followed, in rapid succession, by the rattle of musketry, and the echoes of the narrow defile multiplied the reports.

It soon became evident that the advance of the royalists had been arrested, for that portion of their column still within Vernon's view first closed, and then seemed to be alternately swayed backwards or forwards, as the pressure from the front or rear rolled the masses to and fro, like a river meeting the tide. Riderless horses now came galloping back from the front, breaking through the ranks, or plunging wildly into the river; the roar of the cannon sounded nearer and nearer; the crisis of the combat was at hand, and Vernon directed his Indians to open a fire, from the edge of the cliff, on their opponents below.

The distance was too far for any certain aim, but still the effect was too galling to be

tamely borne; and he observed the royalists detach a party who clambered up the side of the ravine, where the brushwood afforded them fair cover from the shots of the Indians, to force him from his vantage ground, the possession of which was every instant becoming more important to whichever side could maintain it. A fierce effort ensued. The royalist leader led his men gallantly on, but they fought under immense disadvantages; they were picked off by the Indians while climbing up places where they could not find firm footing to return the fire, which was fast thinning their numbers.

Loose rocks were rolled down on them; and arrows, and even stones, were discharged with fatal aim. Still their leader continued to ascend, clambering up under cover of bushes and rocks, and taking advantage of every inequality which the brow of the bank presented, with a presence of mind and courage which compelled Vernon to feel interested for so gallant an opponent; and if his followers had equalled their officer in activity and courage, they would probably have won the summit, and scattered their opponents.

But this was not the case. Many men had fallen killed or wounded, and still more had either stopped, crouching under the protection of some rock or hollow, or had retreated back to their main body; and the royalist colonel, for such was his rank, found himself almost unsupported on the top of the cliff. He was a tall, handsome man, about forty years old; his figure thin, but showing great muscular strength.

The Indians rushed forward to attack, and Vernon to save him.

The royalist officer turned round to cheer on the soldiers, whom he hoped to find closely following him, but not one remained; and he was seized at the same instant by two Indians, who wrested his sword from his hand, while Vernon called on him to surrender.

"Never to rebels and savages!" exclaimed the Spaniard, wrestling fiercely with his captors.

There was something in the tone of his voice as he thus spoke which was familiar to Vernon's ear. He looked at him earnestly, and old recollections flashed on his mind.

"Good God, Sanchez! I cannot be mistaken: it is my old friend of Morillo's army — my deliverer at Malpartida de Caceres."

"Yes," said the Spaniard, sadly and reproachfully, "that is my name; and yours, sir, I should say was Vernon. You resemble a brave officer whom I remember well in the English army, then fighting as an ally in the royal cause. But surely you, sir, a leader of savages, and a partisan of rebels, cannot be the same person: my eyes are deceiving me."

"Yes, I am the same; and I will tell you how all this has happened hereafter. Now you must remain my prisoner: further efforts are in vain; my friends have won the day. Look below! observe how your forces are breaking their ranks. Horses and men are in confusion, and see! there is the advance of the patriots."

As he spoke the republicans made a halt, just after the bend, where the road a little widened, opened their ranks, and drew forward and pointed three guns. They were discharged at the retreating masses of the royalists, and succeeded by a close fire of musketry.

For a minute or two nothing could be seen except the white smoke curling upwards, but a rushing sound of footsteps, accompanied by loud cheers and wild cries, told that the patriot forces were making a furious charge. When the veil of smoke rolled away, the royalists' column was dispersed; the dead and the wounded alone remained, watched by a number of black vultures, who were towering high in the sky, awaiting the coming feast; the rest had fled, and the republican troops were hurrying on in pursuit.

Vernon with his Indians was ordered to join the rear of the patriot column, and descending to the road with his prisoner, he followed the advance of the main body, retarded by the difficulty of moving on the cannon, which were still in front, ready to disperse any stand or rally of their opponents; but none was attempted, and he had now full leisure to explain to his prisoner the circumstances and motives which had induced him to join the patriot army; but he felt his cheek burn with embarrassment, if not with shame, as he tried to justify the impulse which he had obeyed.

Vernon, in the Peninsula, had known Colonel Sanchez as a captain in the Spanish army, under Morillo. Circumstances had then thrown them together, and esteem and friendship had followed. On one occasion Vernon, when on out-post duty, would probably have been killed or taken prisoner by a foraging party of French cavalry, but for the timely rescue effected by Sanchez; and now he dared not think to what horrible fate his friend might be exposed.

Colonel Sanchez's story was soon told. He had been promoted into a Spanish regiment, destined for service in the colonies, and had, consequently, left Spain and sailed for Caraccas, with other reinforcements, intended to quell the insurrection in Venezuela. He had now been serving with his regiment for a year in South America, and between war and climate had lost nearly all the men whom he brought out with him.

The fatal mistake of hastening on without waiting for their cannon, which during a forced march had been left in the rear of the column, instead of being placed in front, had now caused

the defeat of the royalist forces, and made him a prisoner.

"I was sick of this service," said he, in conclusion, "but it is now all over. *Your* friends, Captain Vernon, will no doubt hang or shoot me, as they do all prisoners."

"Never," said Vernon: "I have some interest with our leader, and he shall not refuse me."

Colonel Sanchez shook his head, and answered, "You will try, my old friend, no doubt, but you will fail. You don't know the horrors of this war. We detested the French in Spain, but that was a mild feeling compared to the hatred that is the curse of civil war. I know that my fate is inevitable. I had rather have fallen fighting; but God's will be done."

Vernon would willingly have released his prisoner on the spot, and aided his flight, but this seemed hopeless. Surrounded as Sanchez now was by foes, nothing but Vernon's protection preserved his life for a moment; and great as the risk might be, still the chance of softening the governor of Barcelona seemed preferable to an attempt at escape. Meanwhile

the patriot army emerged from the Boca pass, and halted at a ruined hamlet on a rising ground, overlooking the plain. Pursuit of the scattered royalists was suspended, and preparations were making to encamp for the night.

The instant Vernon joined the main body, his prisoner was demanded, and he was compelled to surrender his friend to the indignities and cruelties which might await him. After spending about an hour in mustering his Indians, and arranging their plan of encampment, he left them constructing some shelter against a thunder storm which had been threatening all day, and now was beginning to break.

His object was to see the governor of Barcelona. He found him surrounded by patriot officers in what had been the stable of a large farm house; the main building had apparently been burned by the royalists only that morning, the roof had fallen in, and smoke was still issuing from the ruins. The mangled remains of an old man and of a woman were lying in a stall, where probably they had tried in vain to conceal themselves.

When Vernon entered, Don Diego was giving orders and receiving reports from the officers around him, his cheek was flushed, his eye sparkled, and his whole countenance was lit up with the mingled expression of success and revenge; but the latter passion seemed triumphant, for at the very instant Vernon entered, his blood ran cold as he heard orders given that a firing party should be in readiness at day-break in the morning to shoot a prisoner of rank.

"The rest of the ruffians who have been taken are not," he said, and he pointed as he spoke to the bodies of the victims lying at the further end of the building, "deserving of such a death; we will hang them at our first convenient leisure."

Vernon could control his anxiety no longer, and advancing to the group, intreated the governor to give him a private interview.

"Impossible, my young friend," he replied, anticipating perhaps what Vernon's demand might be. "You see how I am engaged, and I cannot send these officers away; we have much to arrange before to-morrow, so, Captain

Vernon, let me know your wishes as quickly and as shortly as you can."

"Governor, a friend by whose side I have fought in old Spain, was this morning my prisoner. He has been forcibly taken from my charge by your orders, and I am here to entreat you to use him well. He is guiltless of the cruelties which stain your civil war, for he is a man of honour and a gentleman. He was sent from Spain to join the royal armies by the orders of his superiors, and however unwilling he might be to engage in such service he could not as a soldier refuse. The fortune of war threw him into my hands; release him, sir, and he will pledge his honour to return to his native Spain, and never fight again against you or your cause. If, as you have often told me, you are delighted to serve me as an Englishman, if you are really obliged to me for my readiness in joining to defend your lives and your homes, as a man and as a Christian, I conjure you to release Colonel Sanchez on his parole, on his pledge to you sworn if you like it, on all you both hold sacred, that he will re-

turn to Spain, and never draw his sword again against you."

Vernon's voice faltered as he ended, for as he went on he could read refusal in the louring brow of the governor. The compressed lips and dilated nostril showed that the tiger passions were aroused, and that the thirst of blood was upon him.

A murmur of disapprobation arose from the other patriot leaders as Vernon finished speaking, and his ear caught the words, "Nonsense, preposterous demand!" as they exchanged looks of astonishment at what seemed to them so strange a request.

The governor paused for a second or two, as if to arrange his words, and then replied :—

"I am sorry, Captain Vernon, that what you ask is impossible — it is out of my power, even if I wished it, to save Colonel Sanchez (if that is his name) from the doom which a council of these officers has already awarded. He must die the death of a soldier to-morrow morning, and that before we march to follow up our successes. Do not pain me by saying any thing more — I will not, I cannot hear

you;" and he turned round as if to retire behind the group of officers and to evade all further importunity.

"Stop, sir, one moment!" cried Vernon; "hear me declare that I will not remain one moment longer associated with your murdering companions."

And tearing out the tri-colour cockade from his hat, he threw it on the ground — while his hand instinctively sought the handle of his sword.

"You will not bear this," said one of the republican officers to the governor. "Surely you will have this mad foreigner arrested. If I had the ordering of the matter, he should be shot to-morrow morning, together with his dear friend."

"No," said the governor; "not so, Morales, but we will relieve Captain Vernon from all charge or command in this army. There — make out his passport; and to-morrow morning I would recommend his leaving us before the sun is up, or he may see that which will pain him, and which he cannot prevent."

Vernon took the passport, and returned to his

bivouac, and in a rude hut which had been put together for him took shelter from the storm, which was now bursting over head; and sending for the old chief Maoro, held with him long and anxious counsel.

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN Colonel Sanchez, about an hour before this conversation at the governor's head-quarters, was demanded from Vernon, he was disarmed and pinioned, and conducted to an open space where a group of the leaders were assembled. He was asked his name and rank. He answered briefly and truly.

"Were you with General Boves and his band of robbers, when the town of Caraccas was taken, the patriot leaders murdered, and the town pillaged?"

"I was, but I had nothing to do with the executions: they were ordered by a higher authority. I restrained the plunder and bloodshed of the captured town as far as my own followers were concerned. I could not do more."

"He has said enough," exclaimed several voices at once; "take him away to the quarter-guard; to-morrow morning you will see the

sun for the last time, Colonel Sanchez ; your blood is forfeited to our just retribution ; you will be shot at sunrise."

His guards led their prisoner away, and conducted him through the midst of the camp to an old cattle mill for grinding maize, which, situated on the flank of their position, could be made use of as a guard-room ; adjoining it was an outhouse, which, as it had no window, must have been built as a storeroom for grain. Into this outhouse Colonel Sanchez was led, the door was barred and bolted on the outside, and he was left alone and in darkness to pass the night — heavy rain was falling, accompanied by distant thunder.

He threw himself down on some bundles of wood piled up in one corner, and tried to prepare his mind for the change which awaited him. In a few hours he was to take leave for ever of this anxious delusive world, with all its hopes, its struggles, and its disappointments. As a good Catholic he earnestly wished for the consolation of a priest, but this was impossible. He then composed his mind by long and earnest prayer, entreating forgiveness of all the sins

that his conscience accused him of. These were neither many nor grievous, and trusting in a Christian's hope of forgiveness, he felt his mind relieved, and he tried to compose himself to sleep, but this was vain. Visions of the past, of his early boyhood, and his father's ancient mansion near Seville, with its trellised garden and pleasant fountains, where, eluding his mother's anxious care, he climbed the chesnut trees, or paddled his boat across the Guadalquiver, came back vividly to his mind's eye.

"It is well my parents do not live," thought he, "to mourn my fate. But Antonia! my dear Antonia! who will break to her the tidings of her betrothed Juan's death? My letter full of hope, and telling her that I was sure I could soon return, will ill prepare her for the shock."

Colonel Sanchez was a man of firm purpose and strong nerves; but he now gave way to the bitterness of grief, and affection brought tears to his eyes, which neither the immediate expectation of an ignominous death, nor bodily suffering, could have extorted from him. Hours passed on: the silence of his cell was broken only by distant thunder, gusts of wind, and

the pattering of heavy rain on the roof, or the guard changing the sentinel at his door. As the night wore on, this last sound seemed to cease altogether, and Sanchez envied the guard the sleep which appeared to have overtaken them. He almost slept himself when he was roused by the indistinct sound of what seemed a struggle, or as if one of the guard had stumbled and fallen in the dark; then there was a pause — nothing was heard but the raging of the storm without, then the bolt and bar outside his prison door were slowly and cautiously withdrawn, and he drew a long breath, and felt his heart beat audibly as the unexpected hope of rescue flashed on his mind; the door opened, and three figures could be seen entering the cell, as the gleam of the distant lightning illuminated the doorway for an instant; in a moment Vernon was at Colonel Sanchez's side, and whispered in a low tone, as he drew a knife from his pocket to cut the thongs which bound him:—

"Be silent: the guard seem all asleep in the mill: they have closed the door to keep out the rain: we have gagged and bound the

sentry: be quick, and follow!" — and one by one the rescuers and the rescued moved slowly and cautiously out of the outhouse, and were joined by another figure who rose as they passed from kneeling on the body of the prostrate sentry. He had been ordered to keep him quiet, and had taken some effectual means of doing so, for the man, when he was left, did not stir.

In perfect silence they passed huts and ruins crowded with the republican troops, who seemed buried in the sound sleep which succeeds a day of fatigue, and gained the edge of a wood just as the first dawn began to break through the cloudy horizon. Colonel Sanchez recognised in two of the Indians who had aided in his rescue, the very men who had made him prisoner the day before.

Vernon had found his Indians as determined as himself to escape from the patriot army. They had become desperate when they found that it was to advance into Cumana. He prevailed on Maoro and two others to remain and aid in saving Sanchez. The rest slunk away from their camp one by one as the night

and storm came on, and, at the time of the rescue were far on their road by mountain paths practicable only to themselves. Maoro, his Indians, and Vernon, had lain for hours concealed near the mill house, watching, at last successfully, for their opportunity.

"Your horses are saddled ready for you under that sand-box tree further on, Captain Vernon," said Maoro; "see, Jose sees us and is leading them to us, and now, farewell; the Indian has kept his word, and has repaid the first kindness he ever received from the white man."

Vernon could only express his thanks to his faithful Indian friends, and gave some money to Jose, who said that he also should return with his chief.

"Make haste, mount quickly, and ride fast," said Jose, as he put the reins of his horse into Vernon's hand; "I hear sounds, perhaps they are seeking you where they believe that our tribe encamped last night; let them search and threaten, not a man remains there to satisfy their vengeance, and no one in the camp is so well mounted as you."

The Indians plunged into the forest, while Vernon and his friend rode rapidly through an opening in the wood, which soon brought them to a road running from the north to the south; turning their horses heads southward, they rode on for some miles, until they reached a spot where the road divided, the right branch crossing a small stream and taking a south-west direction, and the left road appearing to lead eastward round a gentle ascent. Not a house or a human being was in sight; there the fugitives pulled up, and looked back to discover any sight or sound of pursuit; the rain had ceased, and the rising sun was bursting through the clouds.

"I think we are safe, for the present, from your late friends," said Colonel Sanchez; "they have either thought us not worth the chase, or they have taken a wrong scent; and now in what direction do you propose that we should turn our horses' heads?"

"That is precisely the question which I was going to ask you, Sanchez. I hope, with you, that the immediate danger is over; but, as yet, I have formed no plan. I had no time to think

of any thing but how to save you from what was to have taken place at this instant."

"Yes, that sunrise was to witness my execution; but we must not waste precious moments in idle acknowledgments. Do you know where these two roads lead?"

"No, I have not the slightest knowledge of this country."

"So I supposed. Well, then, I do know the country, and both these roads. I have marched along them more than once. The inhabitants around us are all bitter republicans; and, after the defeat which the royal troops sustained yesterday in that fatal pass, I have no doubt that these people are all up in arms, and flocking to join the revolutionary standard; and, besides, I fear that the royalist troops must have fallen back towards St. Leon de Caraccas, and that the rebel forces are now interposed between us. We could not escape detection; either you or I should be recognised. So this right branch of the road leading westward would be fatal to us: we must not now attempt it."

"And the other road?" asked Vernon.

"Is dangerous also; but still I would recommend our taking it. It leads, in a south-east direction, to the town of Aragu, now, perhaps, occupied by the rebels. But, at all events, that town is far too distant to be reached: we must seek nearer refuge. There is the small village of Pontenova some forty miles further on: I halted there for a night only a week ago. I was quartered on the padre, who is an excellent man. He is from Old Spain, and at heart a royalist. I feel confident that he both will and can protect, or at least conceal us: at all events, we must try him. Our horses are, I think, up to it: though they are good for this country, they have not the bottom of Europeans; and I do not think that they could do more."

Vernon could suggest no better plan; so, turning to the left branch of the road, as they rode slowly up the side of the hill, they tried to form plans for their future proceedings.

Each had equal reason to dread falling into the hands of the republicans.

Vernon was anxious to reach any seaport from which he could embark for Jamaica; and

Sanchez was eager to rejoin his regiment and the royalist army. But these objects seemed, for the present, to be unattainable. The whole line of coast was in the hands of armed insurgents, or of the republican troops; and a country in open insurrection divided them from the royalists.

Vernon had the passport given to him by the governor of Barcelona on the preceding evening, which was made out for himself and one servant. Both he and Sanchez had fortunately considerable sums of money in gold in their purses. Vernon's dress did not betray the party which he had espoused; but Colonel Sanchez was in the royalist uniform, and therefore exposed to arrest, if, as he supposed, the country which they were passing through was in the possession of the insurrectionary forces.

As they rode on debating on all these difficulties, they occasionally met parties of the inhabitants; but they were never stopped, and seldom questioned. Their military appearance, which they could not as yet disguise, seemed to create alarm in a country which was under-

going the miseries of civil war, and where no one could foretell, from day to day, which party might gain the ascendency; and all knew that the slightest appearance of partisanship on the losing side would call down the vengeance of the victor of the day. So the few inhabitants or travellers whom they passed on the road drew aside with an instinctive dread, and even those who suspected them to be of the adverse party did not venture on more open hostility than an angry look, or a muttered curse.

Meanwhile the sun rose high and hot, and Vernon and Sanchez felt quite exhausted from the joint effects of fatigue and hunger. Their horses, which had started fresh from several days' rest, but not the better prepared for long, steady work, had become tired, and could hardly be goaded on to any pace beyond a stumbling walk, and some rest and food were absolutely necessary. They were therefore compelled to seek refreshment at a farm-house, which stood at a short distance from the road. Their appearance evidently excited suspicion. The master of the house was not at home: his wife, an unhappy-looking

elderly Creole, at first asked her guests no questions, but, at their request for food, put before them some cold beef and cassada bread, a bottle of rum, and a jar of water; and told an old mulatto servant, the only man who appeared in the house, to take the travellers' horses to the stable, and give them some Indian corn.

Vernon and his companion made a hearty meal. Their hostess watched them with impatient and dissatisfied looks, seated herself in the window, and seemed anxiously looking out for her husband's return. He was a stock farmer, she said, and reared both horses and cattle; and had gone out since morning to look after some horses which had been missed from the pasture, but she expected his return every moment. On Sanchez venturing to ask her if she had heard any news, she restrained herself no longer, but vented her complaints on both the contending parties. The royalists, she said, had taken away the best of her husband's horses, and had killed his cattle, and would not pay him for either; and then came the republicans, who threatened to burn down

the house, because they accused him of aiding the enemy, and ended by forcing her eldest son to join their ranks, and she never expected to see him again. So, she said, she had reason to curse both parties. She then looked at Sanchez, and added,—

"You are one of the royalists. I suspect, from your accent and manner, that you are from Old Spain, and your dress is that of our oppressors. Make haste, and quit my house; for if my husband and his herdsmen return and find you here, I would not answer for your lives. He says that we never shall thrive again till all the locusts from the old country are driven away and destroyed; and so, by the blessing of the Virgin, I hope they soon will be; for we heard last night (I hope it is true) that the patriots have met with that Boves and his robbers in the Boca pass, and killed them all."

The fugitives needed no further hint; they mounted their horses, and proceeded on their way to Ponte Nova, more than ever convinced that, for the present, their only chance of safety was concealment, if, indeed, that could be obtained.

They urged on their horses as best they might; still the heat was succeeded by the shadows of evening, and even the short twilight had disappeared, and the moon was bright, before they arrived at Ponte Nova, and, after crossing the bridge from which it takes its name, passed through a long, straggling village. It was a picture of repose; the moon shone full on the long wooden houses, with their open balconies; the doors were all closed, and the inmates had retired to their beds; the angry bark of an occasional watch-dog, roused by the clatter of the horses' feet on the stony road, was the only sound. After passing a church at the further end of the village, Sanchez turned up a narrow lane, bordered by hedges of cactus and bamboo, and broke the silence which they had both observed while riding through the village, by pointing out to Vernon a building before them which rose dark and grim in the moonlight, and was surrounded by a high wall, as his friend the priest's house.

"It looks more like a prison than a private house," replied Vernon.

"And so perhaps you, in your heretical notions, might have called it in past times, for it was a nunnery; but the holy sisters have been scared away by the war, and have sought a safer sanctuary. Now it is occupied only by the padre and his niece. I see no light from the windows, but I hope, from my old friend's habits, that he has not yet retired for the night; he generally sits up late, poring over his books; he was educated at the college of Salamanca, and is very learned. But here we are; come round this way, to the stable-yard, where I will leave you with the horses while I enter the house by the back-door, and see whether my friend the padre is still up, and whether there are any strangers with him. We must be as cautious as we can, not only for our own sakes, but that we may not compromise the old man with his rebel flock."

Vernon led the horses into a stable, and in a few minutes was rejoined by Sanchez.

"We are safe for the present," said he; "I have seen the padre; he is not a little frightened, but he consents to conceal us; there, leave the poor horses, they shall be cared for

presently ; come with me, and I will introduce you to the worthy priest ;" and entering a door at the back of the house, Sanchez led the way, through a long stone passage, to a room at the further end, where an elderly man, wearing the ecclesiastical dress, rose to receive his guests. A lamp stood on the table, which was covered with books, papers, and writing materials ; these had been pushed hastily from him. The spectacles, which he did not remove, did not quite conceal the startled expression of his eyes, confirmed by the tone of his voice as he tried to welcome his dangerous visitors.

He looked from sixty to seventy years old, tall and robust, with prominent features, and a complexion which had once been fair, but which time and climate had embrowned to a chesnut colour. His high bald forehead was fringed by a few grey hairs, and, in spite of his uneasiness, a half smile played about his full lips as he told Vernon how much he respected a British officer, as one of the deliverers of his native country, Spain, and how rejoiced he should be if he could aid him.

"My friend, Colonel Sanchez, has told me your story. You were wrong in joining the republicans at Barcelona; but that is now over, and your noble conduct in rescuing Sanchez must be repaid at all risks; but you are here in imminent danger. The republican authorities (patriots as they call themselves) are now our masters, at least for the present, and they would not scruple to hang you for the very act for which I honour you; then, again, you were seen in arms with these ruffians, fighting against the royalist troops, and I would not answer for your safety if you could reach any post yet in the possession of the king's troops; but even that doubtful course cannot now be attempted. I know not what to do or to advise. What induced you, Sanchez, my son, to fly in this direction? Every league you have travelled to-day has only plunged you deeper in the midst of your enemies."

"Nay, good father," answered Sanchez, "I told you that we had no alternative; every other road was barred, and I relied on your protection as our only resource."

"And you shall have it while I can give it. It is fortunate if you have not been seen as you passed through the village. The alcade there does not love me; but, if you really have passed unnoticed, I hope that I can conceal you here without very great risk. I think I can depend on the secrecy of my own servants, and my niece will do all she can to make your stay under our roof as little dangerous or unpleasant as these dreadful times will admit of; she is even now preparing beds for you. Come, I see how fatigued you are; old Manuel, my servant, has gone to take care of your horses, so I will show you the way to your sleeping room," and taking up the lamp he led the way to a room on the opposite side of the passage, the windows of which opened into the garden: two beds had been hastily arranged on the floor, and Vernon and Sanchez were left to enjoy the rest which they so much needed.

Late the next morning they rose, their bodies refreshed by sleep, and their spirits, as is generally the case with bold men, rather raised than depressed by the difficulties which surrounded them: the old servant summoned them to

breakfast, and their host introduced Vernon to a rather pretty-looking lady past the prime of life, who did the honours of the table, as his niece Donna Maria. She was evidently a Creole, or native of Venezuela, and soon betrayed a leaning towards the republican faction, while the old Spaniard, her uncle, did not disguise that he was a royalist at heart. Both looked uneasy, especially the lady.

"Sanchez," said Father Matteo, "I celebrated early mass at our church this morning, and met the alcade there, and talked to him and to others of my flock. The report of your disaster in the Boca pass is spreading all over the country — every one here has heard the news. Some say that the whole of the royalist troops were cut to pieces, others that they have fled to St. Leon de Caraccas; then, too, there is a rumour of several royalist officers having escaped from the patriots just as they were going to be shot, rescued by a conspiracy which broke out among some Indians, who rushed in hundreds from the woods and carried them off. A reward of two hundred dollars each is, they say, offered for the apprehension

of two of these officers; and one Lopez, who lives at the stock farm about fifteen miles off, on the road to the Boca, has come in this morning, and tells a story of two royalist officers, supposed to be these fugitives, who forcibly entered his house yesterday in his absence, and with drawn swords compelled his wife to furnish them with food, and were just going to rob her of all the money in the house, when they saw him returning, and rode off no one knows where; some say that they were seen passing in this direction; but all agree that they could not have crossed the bridge and ridden through the village unobserved. They are supposed to be hiding in the woods, so the alcade has posted some armed men at the house on this side of the bridge to watch for them, and so obtain the reward."

"How fortunate that no one was abroad when we passed through the village," answered Sanchez.

"And did you really draw your swords on poor Donna Jacinta Lopez?" asked the priest's niece.

"No: how can you ask such a question?

we did call at her house and beg for food, which she supplied us with ungraciously enough. But, Vernon, this reward for our capture will increase our difficulties a hundredfold; they will now question us everywhere. Can you give us no advice, Father Matteo?"

"Alas! my son, none, but to trust in God, and remain quiet in your concealment here."

"And so expose us to the vengeance of the alcade and of the patriot government when your hiding-place is traced to our house," sobbed out Donna Maria. "Ah! uncle, you never will learn prudence, even in your old age: I see how all this will end. You will be sent to prison, and perhaps hanged, and I shall be turned out destitute on the world. Oh! good gentlemen, do saddle your horses and ride away quickly, and I dare say they won't catch you."

"For shame, Maria," interrupted the priest. "What, abandon to certain destruction my friends who have sought my protection! Never, niece, if the danger was even greater. As it is, I trust that, by taking every precaution, it will be averted. Go to your room and pray to the

Holy Virgin to forgive your want of charity. I am ashamed of you."

This discussion was terrible to Vernon and Colonel Sanchez, but what could they do? Even if the country further on had been in a less dangerous state, their horses were scarcely fit for immediate hard service. They therefore remained with the worthy priest, never leaving their room except at night, when they ventured to walk in the old nunnery garden, which was screened on all sides by high walls.

The padre recounted to them every day some fresh report, all tending to show that the republican cause was every where successful, and the royal troops retreating.

The household consisted of only three servants, old Manuel, his wife and daughter; and the padre assured them that these were all old servants, on whose fidelity and discretion he had full reliance.

A week passed over without fresh alarm. Colonel Sanchez got rid of his uniform, and put on the dress usually worn by the inhabitants of that part of the country, the exchange being effected through the agency of Manuel.

Vernon's dress was plain, and not very remarkable. On close examination, the finer texture and different cut of his London-made blue coat and Cossac trousers might betray their foreign origin; but still he hoped that they would not attract observation. The passport which he had obtained from the governor of Barcelona was examined, it was a printed form, filled up in the usual way, and enjoining all civil and military authorities to permit Captain Vernon and his servant to pass to Barcelona. The document was stamped with the seal of the Venezuelian Republic. By the advice of the padre the passport was altered, Barcelona erased, and the town of Aragu substituted; as, if his guests were driven to seek other refuge, it could only be hoped for in that direction. To attempt to retrace their steps towards Barcelona would be certain destruction. Cumana would probably prove almost as dangerous, for Colonel Sanchez was personally well known there; whereas in the remoter parts of the province, farther south, they might hope, by assuming some fictitious characters, to evade discovery, and escape either to some of the small ports on the north-eastern

coast, and so cross to the English island of Trinidad, or if the road to any part of the coast proved inaccessible, then there was the alternative, hazardous it is true, but still possible, of crossing the river Oronoko, and gaining refuge in the bordering territory of Portuguese Guiana. While the loyal old padre was endeavouring to conceal the fugitives, or to aid them to escape, if circumstances should drive them from the protection of his roof, the lady whom he introduced as his niece was doing all that she could to rid herself of their dangerous presence. She first tried to effect her purpose by making their stay miserable. Ill humour, false alarms, tears and threats, were all tried in vain. And then she meditated the more certain course of conveying information to the alcade.

Fortunately for the world, treachery and cowardice are generally accompanied by irresolution, and Donna Maria required a confidant with whom she could talk over her schemes and fortify her wavering mind. And so she imparted to her maid Celia, old Manuel's daughter, all her alarms, and her efforts to rid the house of the intruders.

Celia sympathised with her mistress in disliking the danger and the trouble which the guests had occasioned, and assisted her in all her minor efforts to dislodge them; but she was terrified when she heard of the extremity of giving information to the village authorities; and she at once made the proposal known to her father.

Manuel both loved his master and disliked Donna Maria, and he told the whole matter to the padre.

The information came just in time: Donna Maria was overtaken by the padre on her way to the village, and in her anger at being forcibly compelled to return home did not deny her purpose. She would have taken care she said to make such terms with the village authorities, that both she and the padre would have been unmolested, and only the intruders arrested. The padre, full of wrath, locked her up in one of the nun's cells. This decided Vernon and Sanchez to expose their host to no more sacrifices or risks, but to endeavour to escape at once to the town of Aragu.

"You should not do so," replied the priest,

"but that I can advise no safer course. I hear that a body of the republican troops is marching in this direction. If they halt at Pontenova, some of them will no doubt be quartered on me in this very house, and as we have to fear treachery within as well as danger without, I dare not press you to stay. I will give you a letter to Señor Velasquez, a physician, who is under some obligations to me: he is, I believe, tainted with revolutionary principles, but still, for my sake, he may assist you; but don't apply to him unless you cannot do better. How are you provided with money? All that I have by me is heartily at your service."

"A thousand thanks," replied Vernon; "but we are both provided with as much money as we can conveniently carry. At twelve to-night we will mount our horses, Sanchez and I have arranged our plans: we do not tell them to you, because the knowledge would only increase your difficulties if you should be questioned."

"God bless and preserve you then, my children. You must encounter great dangers, I fear. Be bold and be wary."

CHAPTER V.

On the afternoon of the second day after the conversation which has just been related, the corregidor of Aragu, a consequential vulgar middle-aged man whom the revolution had raised from a thriving saddle and harness maker to his present dignity, was sitting in his verandah; a table, with some papers and writing materials stood near him, and he was reading over, for the twentieth time, a letter which he had received from General Bolivar, dated from Cumana, informing him of the total dispersion in that quarter of their mutual enemies, the royalists, the opportune landing of some of the auxiliary force, the British Legion under General Sir Gregor M'Gregor at Cumana, and exhorting him, with many compliments on his distinguished patriotism, to raise funds and collect men for the service of the republic. Bolivar was then no more than a successful and rising leader; still the complimentary style of the letter flattered

the vanity of the corregidor, and the frequent repetition of his new official title made his heart swell. He rose up, put down the paper, and took a turn up and down the gallery to compose his mind. His former foreman, now his alguacil, or chief constable, a sharp-visaged active looking man, with peculiarly large keen grey eyes, now entered to tell him that an officer just arrived from Barcelona, and his secretary, were waiting in the hall below to pay their respects to him.

"An officer to wait on me! hand me my silver-laced dress coat and my sword, Francisco, and while I am putting them on tell me who they appear to be."

"The officer is one of the British legion under the brave Sir Gregor M'Gregor, to whom he is nearly related. He is, of course, English; but his servant, or secretary, who is a native of Cumana, tells me that they were sent from Cumana to Barcelona to buy horses to mount their cavalry; but not being able to complete the number they require at Barcelona, the governor, Don Diego, recommended his proceeding on here, both because this part of the country is so

famous for its horses, and because he relied on your patriotic assistance."

"Certainly, Francisco, my devotion to my country is well known. I wonder if they want saddles too. Did you hear the officer's name? does he speak Spanish?"

"I forget his name: he speaks a little Spanish, but with a foreign accent."

The dress coat and the sword were now put on, and the dignitary strutted down stairs to his hall to receive the strangers.

The British officer bowed, and desired his secretary to show his honour, the mayor, his passport; the secretary handed the paper to the mayor, who scrutinised it with an important air.

"All formal and correct, Captain Vernon," said he, returning it to the officer. "I know Don Diego's signature well. I often sold to him — I mean we had commercial transactions together before the claims of our country compelled us both to enter on our present most responsible offices. How is his Excellency?"

"I left him quite well."

"You came to Barcelona to procure horses

for the British legion, I understand. I have just heard from my friend, General Bolivar, of the landing of part of your brave legion at Cumana. I am not surprised that you could not procure many horses at Barcelona; the war has exhausted their stock. I hope you may be more successful here; but this district has also been ravaged by the royalist troops, and all the horses that they could secure carried off; however we will try. I am bound to assist you. Will your glorious chief, Sir Gregor M'Gregor, want any saddles for his legion? When did you leave Cumana? Have you any letters to me from the governor or General Bolivar? Where is General Paez, is he still at Carthagena? And what is the latest news from our army in that direction?"

Vernon looked perplexed and nervous at having to answer such a host of questions, where one mistake might be fatal; his secretary caught his eye, and stepped forward to his relief.

"Pardon me, most excellent sir," said he, bowing low to the mayor, "but my master does not yet speak Spanish fluently; it was for

this reason that I was requested to accompany him." And Sanchez with a bold face and firm voice not only answered every question which had embarrassed Vernon, but ran on describing the position of the armies, and the principal events of the war for the last year, so as quite to enchant the gossiping corregidor. He pressed Vernon and his secretary to make his house their home while they staid at Aragu, and went out to give orders that their horses should be looked to, and Vernon's valise taken up to the bed-room which he ordered to be prepared for him.

"Bravo!" said Sanchez, as soon as they were alone; "at all events we have capital quarters for a day or two."

"And then," said Vernon ——

"And then we must act according to circumstances. You might as well ask the pilot of a ship what sails he would hoist on the morrow, as question me as to what ruse de guerre may next be forced upon us; it will depend on which way the wind blows. You wonder, I see, at my faculty of invention — so do I myself; but danger and necessity quicken our faculties."

"Why," replied Vernon, smiling in spite of his alarm, "I think you proved yourself an accomplished improvisatore, when you sent away that prying fellow at our inn, in the village, last night; with such an accurate description of ourselves, and how we had taken the road to Cumana, that he fancied the dollars offered for our capture all but clinking in his pocket."

"Yes; it was not ill done. But here comes our host to announce dinner; the savour of the stew has reached me from the next room for the last five minutes, and I am as hungry as a wolf."

The folding doors were thrown open, and Señor Nunez, with his laced coat and long sword, advanced to request Captain Vernon and his secretary to honour his family dinner.

No ladies made their appearance, and Vernon congratulated himself on finding that they were now the inmates of an old bachelor's house. He affected to speak Spanish with difficulty, while Sanchez went on flattering and romancing, to the great gratification of their host. He inquired particularly whether good saddlery could be obtained in the town, and requested to

have an estimate of the price at which one hundred saddles and bridles could be furnished for the legion. Captain Vernon's commission was only to procure horses; but he knew that his relation, General Sir Gregor M'Gregor, wanted saddlery also, as much of that sent out from England had been damaged on board ship.

Señor Nunez was enchanted; visions of army contracts rose before his imagination, and he became quite affectionate to his guests. All that Sanchez said or did had a purpose. In return for giving news, compliments, and hopes of profit, he gained valuable information as to the state of the country, the roads, and positions of the republican troops ; and more than all, he acquired an ascendency over the greedy citizen, which he knew would not easily be displaced, as it was based on self-interest, and cemented by vanity.

All next day the court yard, in rear of the house, was crowded with a succession of horses, brought there for Vernon's inspection. The busy corregidor had spread the news to all the stock farmers round, that an officer of rank, and his secretary, from the British legion, had

arrived with an unlimited order to purchase horses.

Vernon was scarcely master of his character, so he transferred the greater part of the business to his secretary. Sanchez availed himself of the small size of the horses produced, and rejected the greater part of them as under the regulated standard of the British legion; and when the dealers ventured to remonstrate, and tell him that the country did not produce larger horses; that no cavalry ever seen, either patriot or royalist, rode better horses than those which he refused, Sanchez shrugged his shoulders, and said that he quite agreed with them; their horses were fine active animals, and would do admirably for Spanish riders; "but," he added, "you forget, Señors, that the horses we want are to mount the British legion; men of huge stature and weight, who have been fattened up from their earliest youth on roast beef and plum-puddings — a kind of food which produces extraordinary effects, making these people so big and so fierce."

"That is true," replied one of the farmers, "and I do not doubt that the same cause makes

them heretics also; but what is plum-pudding?"

"A kind of fruit as large and as round as a shaddock; it grows on trees in England, and won't thrive anywhere else; but let me look at the feet of that bay horse; he is, I think, of the regulation size, and I will show him to my captain."

Sanchez then made out a list of the few large horses which, to save appearances, he thought he must select, bargained hard for their prices, and told the owners to take them home, and that Captain Vernon would demand them and pay for them on his return from the south. "For we intend," he told the dealers, "to go on towards St. Fernando, to see what horses we can procure there."

Pleasant and amusing as his quarters were, he did not venture to recommend Vernon to remain longer at Aragu: they were yet too near the scene of action to feel secure for even an hour; every league which they could interpose between the revolutionary army and themselves was a protection. And so Sanchez not only obtained a formal passport for Captain Vernon,

of the British legion, and his secretary, to proceed to St. Fernando, on the service of the republic, but also a strong letter of recommendation to the governor of that town, assuring him that they were officers in high favour with his friend General Bolivar, from whom he had recently received a despatch ; and that his Excellency could not do the republic better service than by aiding his friends in every possible way.

Sanchez took this opportunity of providing himself with a small stock of necessaries, and a valise to hold them, and a servant. The servant was a shrewd half caste Indian, whom he seduced from one of the disappointed horse dealers, as a servant and guide, and purchased a mule for his accommodation. The man's name was Carlos ; he looked about thirty years old, was low in stature, and of a slight active make, with penetrating cunning black eyes, a good-humoured rather luxurious looking mouth, and, in his mixed blood, the European rather than the Indian origin, seemed to predominate. He spoke the Indian of his tribe and Spanish as his native languages. He seemed

to know every thing and every body about whom he was questioned. He told his story to Sanchez, while the latter was examining the horses. His mother, he said, had been exchanged by her father (one of a tribe of Indians living on the banks of the Oronoko) for a double-barrelled gun, and a quantity of fishing hooks offered by a Spanish muleteer, with whom she afterwards lived as his wife; and Carlos was the only fruit of this connexion.

As he grew up, he was trained to assist his father in his journeys as a carrier between St. Fernando and Aragu. On his father's death, some ten years before, he had accompanied his mother back to her tribe; but he soon tired of the wild life of the woods, returned to civilisation and towns, and had, for many years, been leading an unsettled wandering life.

On the fourth day after their arrival at Aragu, they took an affectionate leave of their host, hoping to be able to tell him, on their return, the precise number of saddles and bridles which would be wanted for the legion, and rode slowly and boldly out of the town, the barrier guard turning out as they passed, and

presenting arms in compliment to Vernon's supposed rank, as much to his annoyance as to the amusement of Colonel Sanchez.

"What think you of our new acquisition? I see the rascal is riding so far behind as to be out of hearing," asked Sanchez, as they rode slowly southward on leaving the town.

"Why, if you think he may be dishonest, what possessed you to engage him?"

"Because we could not do without him. I know nothing of the country beyond St. Fernando, and we must have a guide. This fellow knows every road and every house, and we must make it his interest to be faithful to us. It is very likely that we may be obliged to make him our confidant; his wits seem as sharp as his stiletto, and I am much mistaken if he does not soon find out our disguise. It was easy to hoodwink that old fool the corregidor, but our new ally must be differently handled."

"I hope you do not intend, my dear Sanchez, to go on much longer with this deception. I am sick of lies, whether I tell them or only act them."

"Why we are playing a game of which life is the stake, and play it out we must. This is the card dealt to us now, to-morrow may be a new one; and seriously, what else can we do? I am ready to adopt whatever course you may suggest, even at the risk, or certainty, I should rather say, of being recognised by your friends, the patriots, when perhaps they would so far change the fate they had intended for me as to hang instead of shooting me. You, indeed, as a foreigner, and an Englishman, might escape with only some temporary imprisonment; but I ——"

"Say no more, Sanchez; you must be sure I would not expose you to any risk which I do not equally encounter myself; so I will be schooled, and try to act my part as well as I can."

"Well then, noble captain, we will go on to this town of St. Fernando in our present characters ——"

"And then?"

"And then we shall probably maintain much the same disguise as that which succeeded so well at Aragu; the deception must hold good

for a few days, thanks to our good friend the ex-saddle maker's recommendatory letters. — Meantime we shall have an opportunity of ascertaining the possibility of our reaching Ciudad Real; that town, I learned yesterday, was, a few days ago, in possession of the royal troops; if once we join them, we shall both be comparatively safe. But I confess I very much fear, that before we can obtain their protection, the royal troops may be compelled to evacuate Ciudad Real."

"And have you a resource if this chance fails us?"

"Not any that I much like. We may have to return to Aragu and carry on the horse-buying farce; but this would sooner or later be discovered, and we should then be in the hands of the Philistines, without hope of rescue; or perhaps we may find means to cross the Oronoko, and, taking refuge in the wilderness, make our way to Portuguese Guiana, from whence it would be easy, I should suppose, to push our way to your English settlement of Essequibo and Demerara."

"In which last scheme, Sanchez, no doubt

our new ally, Carlos, would be invaluable, if he can be trusted.

"And trustworthy we will make him. If he was a fool or a coward I should be afraid of him; but, no, he is shrewd, quick-witted, and bold. I saw it in his looks, I heard it in every word that he said, or I should not have taken him. With such materials we may make anything of him."

"You would like some good principles too, Sanchez, would you not? some little honesty and truth?"

"Honesty and truth! my good Vernon; do you indeed look for such things from a vagabond like this? But you are young, very young; at my age you will estimate men differently. *I* believe every man I meet to be a fool till he shows that he has sense, and a rogue until he proves himself honest."

"I am sorry to interrupt your moral philosophy, Sanchez," said Vernon in a low voice; "but look behind, that fellow Carlos has crept up within ear shot; I trust that he has not overheard too much of our conversation."

"No, I think not; shall we talk to him?"

"As you like; but manage him yourself, your risk is greater than mine."

"Here, Carlos, push on your mule beside me," said Sanchez in his usual careless manner. "How far is it to our final stage, Rio Seco?"

"Ten leagues, sir, and the road is not bad; but you should stop for an hour at a house kept by Martin Gomez, rather more than half way, to refresh the horses and get something by way of dinner for yourselves; your supper is not likely to be over good at the posada at Rio Seco. The house was once well kept, but since old Mondez died his widow makes a bad business of it. These women never know how to manage such matters."

"You know this road well?"

"Yes, sir, I think I could find my way on the darkest night, even in the rainy season. I passed the best ten years of my life, as I have told you, following my father and his mules from St. Fernando to Aragu: it was a merry life, we were welcome every where; now there is not a regular carrier on the road: this accursed war has put an end to all trade, or I

would endeavour to scrape together enough money to buy three or four mules, and try my fortune at my father's old trade again. I should be king of the road now. In my father's time, that greedy young fellow, Sebastian, took from him more than half his custom; but Sebastian was shot by the royalists when they found out that his packsaddles were loaded with ball cartridges instead of cotton goods."

"You would like the carrier life better than the service I took you from at the stock farm, or than returning to your wild life with your mother's tribe in the woods?"

"Why, as to the first, it was absolute slavery, too much work, bad living, and worse wages. The life with the tribe was better, pleasant enough at times, when deer or fish were plentiful; but I got tired of it; I had not enough to do, and what I did do was never so well done, try my best, as the stupidest Indian could have done it. The very women laughed at me when I came home from hunting or fishing empty-handed. Then I, being idle, fell in love with a pretty girl of the tribe; but her father would not give her to me, told me I

could not feed her, and married her to an ugly old chief, who had two other wives. I could not stand that, and so I left them."

"And what did you do then?"

"I sought a living wherever I could get it; sometimes a servant at a posada, sometimes I was engaged to take care of the horse or mule of some dignitary of the church. They give good wages these churchmen, but their rules and fasts did not suit my Indian habits: I never staid long with any of them. I was tired of the stock farm, and had resolved to quit it when it was my good fortune to meet with your Excellencies; the wages you promise me are better than those I received even from the Bishop of Ciudad Real, and it shall not be my fault if we part soon."

"Money is no object to our noble captain," replied Sanchez. "He is very rich; all the English are. If you serve him faithfully, and he really takes a liking to you, I have no doubt you will soon gain money enough to go far towards the purchase of the mules. Now, ride on before us, and see what dinner you can have

ready at the house of this Martin Gomez you tell us of."

"That fellow will be a treasure Vernon, if we can persuade him that it is his interest to be faithful; and you observed how his eyes glistened when I talked to him about the mules. Don't shake your head and look so dissatisfied: I really mean to keep my promise to him: our joint purses can well afford it. Mine is heavier than you think for. When we counted its contents at Ponte Nova, it contained only the twenty doubloons which so miraculously escaped plunder at the Boca by my good fortune in being your prisoner; it is now twice as heavy. I did not intend to tell you, as you are so absurdly scrupulous, but I borrowed another score of broad gold pieces from that silly host of ours at Aragu."

"How does your conscience stand such an affront?"

"Like a lamb. First, because the old fool himself proposed it: he meant it, no doubt, as a bribe to ensure his contract; secondly, because, if I live, I will repay him some day; and, lastly, because it was necessary. It would

pain me to deceive Carlos; but I feel bound by neither honour or sympathy in my intercourse with these blood-thirsty rebels. However, I respect your prejudices, my dear Vernon, and I will offend them as seldom as I can."

The halt for dinner, and the night's resting-place at Rio Seco, were reached without any adventure.

The entertainment at the posada was as bad as it could be; but the fugitives were the only guests, and they went to sleep in their hammocks with a sense of present security which was as new as agreeable. They were on their way early next morning.

The country which they were now passing through had a different aspect: it was a high table land, the soil light and sandy, the forests more open, with frequent intervals of extensive prairies, where herds of cattle and an occasional troop of wild-looking horses might be seen, roaming about the brown pastures unchecked by any fence.

At distant intervals, a long, low, patriarchal looking wooden house, with innumerable sheds and outbuildings, fenced in by rough railings,

interrupted the solitude. Near these farm-houses there were generally a few enclosed patches of maize, or Guinea corn, and a garden of cassada, or sweet potato, looking green and refreshing amidst the withered prairie. No other cultivation was anywhere to be seen: the thin population was not agricultural, but rich in cattle and horses.

The road was heavy and sandy, and water rarely to be met with. Carlos had led his masters to hope that by noon they would reach a wayside public-house, where they could obtain shelter from the sun, an hour's rest, and, possibly, some bread for themselves, and maize for the horses. They were disappointed. The house had been burned down: a few charred and blackened timbers, and heaps of rubbish, were all that remained. There was no one to tell whether this destruction had been accidental, or committed in the wantonness of war and pillage.

"What can we do now, Sanchez?" said Vernon, dismounting from his tired horse; "it is impossible that our horses can carry us much farther without rest and food. Had we

not better turn back and ask for both at that large farm-house we passed near the road, a mile off?"

"We will attempt it, if you choose; but I would not advise the risk. Another Donna Jacinta might be still more mischievous than the last. Let us take Carlos into council. Here, Carlos, what do you recommend us to do?"

"To go on, sir. Get off and lead your horses. Half a league further on there is a bridge, where the road crosses the ravine, which is full of water in the rainy season. It is now probably nearly dry; but I dare say that we shall still find some water, which is all we want. I have every thing else you will require in these bags behind my saddle."

A weary mile and a half was accomplished, and the bridge was at length reached. It stood on several high arches, spanning a rocky ravine. The bed of the stream was now dried up; but Carlos ascended its course for a hundred yards, and found a deep pool, now stagnant, but still full of water. The horses and mule were led there, and allowed to drink;

and then taken to the shady shelter of one of the arches of the bridge, where Carlos unpacked his bags, producing an abundance of hard-boiled eggs, Indian corn cakes, and a flask of brandy for his masters' refreshment, and some maize for the horses and mule; the bags being converted into nose-bags for the use of his quadruped charge.

Nothing could be cooler or more refreshing than the shade of the arch. The large boulder stones, rolled down by the stream in its flood, supplied seats and a table; and, to crown the hour's enjoyment, Carlos produced a bundle of cigars, struck a light with his flint, and then entered into conversation with his masters, in an easy yet unpresuming style, unattainable by an English servant.

He told them that they had a weary distance to perform before they reached the village of St. Eustatia, the halt for the night. The posada there was, he said, little better than that at Rio Seco; but the padre's house was near: it was a comfortable one, and the priest was a zealous patriot (here he looked inquisitively from Vernon to Sanchez), and would,

no doubt, be delighted to accommodate them, and talk about the news, for he had a nephew at Barcelona."

"No, Carlos, we will go to the posada. Say nothing about us to this padre," interrupted Vernon, impatiently.

"Certainly, Señor; but it is a pity; he would be so glad to hear of his nephew, an officer in the patriot army; and it is said that there has been a battle near the Boca pass lately. You could have told him all about it, I suppose. Poor man, he must be very anxious. And besides," he persevered, turning to Sanchez, "he might tell you where the best horses are to be obtained: he is a good judge."

"No, don't say any thing about us to him, Carlos," replied Sanchez. "We have no time to waste, either in telling news or looking after horses. To-morrow evening, I hope, we shall reach St. Fernando. Have you been lately there?"

"About a year ago. I was then a sort of under groom, or helper, in Don Pedro Mendoza's stables, he that is governor there now. But in my time he was a royalist

officer, a commissioner of taxes, as he then was called; but when the times changed, he turned patriot: he made a good bargain it seems."

"What made you leave his service?"

"Why, the head groom made free with the corn-chest, and then threw the blame on those under him; so I was discharged."

"Were you long in Don Pedro's stables?"

"Nearly six months."

"Was he a good master?"

"I saw little of him, and that I did not like: he never spoke to the helpers, only to the head servants; they got good wages, while the work was done by us. You will see a very different person from the mayor of Aragu. No cheating him in his horse's provender, or in any thing else."

"Is Don Pedro a native of the province?"

"No; I believe not, sir. It is said that he came from Spain. Some say that he has Jewish blood. His wife, Donna Ursula, is as sharp and as niggardly as he is. A pretty governor's establishment they must keep be-

tween them. But then he is so cunning and useful, no doubt, to the new government."

Vernon and Sanchez could not help exchanging looks of anxiety at all this intelligence; but repented when they caught the searching eyes of Carlos.

Vernon was silent, but, as the conversation between Sanchez and Carlos continued, he listened with interest not unmixed with alarm. It resembled a fencing match as each endeavoured to pierce the disguise of his opponent's thoughts, and while he parried the discovery of his own.

Carlos, having least to conceal, had the best of it, and when they resumed their journey, Vernon and his companion watched an opportunity of imparting to each other the alarm which both felt. At length Carlos, who had kept his post close behind them, stopped to talk to a meanly dressed young man, who accosted him as an old friend.

Vernon seized the moment, and told Sanchez that he felt almost convinced that Carlos had discovered their disguise, and meant to betray them.

"No, Vernon, I think that he only suspects us; if he was certain, he would not be so inquisitive. He would not risk alarming his game if he had the net ready, and saw his prey going into it. I wish we could discover how much he knows, or suspects, and what are his intentions."

"If I thought that he knew all, and was waiting his opportunity to cage us at St. Fernando, and claim the reward, I would shoot him (and here Sanchez drew out a pistol, and, after examining the flint and priming, replaced it in his holsters,) before we reach the end of the wood which we are now riding through, and hide his carcass in the bushes. But do not look so startled: I will not hurt a hair of the fellow's head, unless I have sure proof of his treachery; as yet, we only suspect. I wish I knew what he is saying to that ill-looking friend of his. He is not yet in sight; and yet he appeared determined all day to lose as little of our conversation as he could help."

"For God's sake, Sanchez, do not murder the man, who, after all, may mean us no harm; but I very much distrust and fear him.

Could you not find some excuse for discharging him at once, and sending him back to Aragu?"

"The middle course which you recommend, Vernon, would be the most dangerous of all. If he has discovered our disguise, and is scoundrel enough to meditate treachery, our discarding him would free him from the apprehension of the only sure remedy I know of (pointing to his holsters); but if he has formed no such plan, and is only trying to find us out, so as to be ready to take advantage of any circumstance that may occur (and this is, I think, the real state of the matter), then we may yet find his knowledge of the country, and his wild instinctive cunning, invaluable. I do not fear the man as you do. I would shoot him, if necessary, this instant; but still there is something bold and daring about him, which I cannot help half liking, and, perhaps, even trusting, far more than my reason approves of. It is a kind of instinct, I believe, but it has seldom misled me. If the risk were only my own, I would take the bold step of taking Carlos at once into my confidence, and, by

bribing his self-interest, and flattering his vanity (thanks to his Indian blood, he shows plenty of that convenient handle), make him wholly mine."

"No, Sanchez, I lack your instinct; pray keep our disguise as long as it will hold together."

"So be it: I think you are wrong, still I promise you that I will not trust Carlos unless I have your consent. Here he comes, spurring hard to overtake us."

"Well, Carlos, what news have you been hearing from your friend on the road?"

"He is an old fellow-servant of mine, sir; he is now, poor fellow, out of place, and is going back to his mother's house at Aragu; he slept at St. Eustatia last night, and tells me that a party of soldiers were expected there this evening from St. Fernando, on their way to Cumana, to join General Bolivar's army. So as I thought you might like to know all about them, I stopped to find out what I could. They expect three officers at the posada, one of them a captain, and about fifty soldiers, levies raised by the new governor. The captain (I forget

his name) was sent from Cumana to conduct them. No doubt Captain Vernon or you, sir, must have known him there. Shall I ride on and make your compliments to these officers, and request them to wait supper till you arrive?"

No, Carlos, remain with us. Captain Vernon and I are too tired to wish to sit up half the night talking to these officers, instead of going to bed. Can you contrive any way of avoiding them?"

And Carlos, without looking at all surprised, suggested that Captain Vernon should feign sickness, and request to have a bed at the padre's house, as the noise and confusion of the posada, crowded by the military, would be intolerable. "You, Señor, cannot leave your sick friend, and I will look after the horses, and keep my eyes and ears open, and tell you all that is going on."

"But how can we depend on the padre's receiving us?"

"I will answer for that. I knew him well when I was groom to the bishop; he will believe any thing I tell him; and he really is a worthy,

soft, good-natured kind of man. I have the greatest respect and regard for him."

As soon as Carlos gave him an opportunity of doing so, Sanchez consulted Vernon as to the proposed scheme of evading the risk of encountering the patriots at the posada. The danger was evident, an officer lately from Cumana must detect the imposture. Vernon, of course, consented.

Anxiety, fatigue, and hunger, and the utter dislike he felt to another disguise, made him really feel faint; and when Carlos, who had been sent on before, entreated the hospitality of the padre, he told more truth than he was aware of when he described the sufferings of his master, the English captain. The distress and alarm which he attributed to the secretary were indeed fictitious.

Father Nicholas told Carlos that he had done quite right in recommending his sick master to honour his humble house. "He will be better here," said he, "than at the posada, where the officers, as they have a right to do, have taken up all the room, and where the soldiers must be noisy; I will prepare for your master's

reception while you ride back and conduct them straight hither; the turn to the posada would be out of their way."

The night had closed in, and the moon had risen before the expected guests reached St. Eustatia, and were guided by Carlos to a small low house, almost hidden in the grove of fruit trees which surrounded it: here Vernon suffered himself to be lifted from his horse, and supported between Sanchez and Carlos, was conducted by the good Father Nicholas into his own sleeping room, put to bed, and some tamarind beverage placed beside him.

"I will request you, sir," he said, addressing Sanchez, "to do me the pleasure of partaking of some more substantial fare in the next room: I will show you the way. How unfortunate that this door has lost its latch; it wont remain shut, and I much fear the smell of this roast turkey and fried ham may annoy your poor sick friend."

The supper was laid out on a table in the middle of the room, and Sanchez and the padre sat down, the former with his back to Vernon's bed-room, and his host opposite to him.

"Your captain looks very pale and uneasy," observed the priest; "has he been long ill?"

"No: a coup de soleil, I fear; the sun was very powerful, and we have been in the saddle all day."

"I hope he will escape fever and delirium; did you not observe how wild and restless he looked when we talked about our supper?"

"We must take care, my dear sir; nothing can be better than the tamarind water in his present state. What a delicious turkey! some more ham, if you please."

"I am glad you like the turkey: it is one of Barbara's own rearing. May I have the honour of joining you in drinking to your noble captain's better health? You will find that sherry pretty good."

Sanchez poured out some wine, and was in the act of bowing to his host, when he saw him drop his untasted glass, push back his chair, and rise in evident consternation; at the same time a long arm from behind him snatched away his own half finished plate.

"He is indeed delirious, poor young gentleman; he will do some mischief," exclaimed the

padre, as he pointed to the figure of Vernon half dressed, who had rushed into the room with his face now flushed by anger, and standing behind Sanchez.

"Sancta Maria! what can we do? I must call for help. He must be put into a straight waistcoat, and forced back to bed." And the terrified priest ran out of the room, calling for Barbara and Carlos."

"Why, Vernon! what does this mean?" said Sanchez, now turning round, and discovering the cause of his host's terror.

"Nothing, but that I am starving, and could endure my hunger no longer. And then, to hear you mocking my misery while you were feasting yourself on these luxuries;" and, half smiling at the passion into which he had worked himself, he emptied the glass which he had seized.

"Indeed, Vernon, I should have soon contrived to relieve you: I thought you were more patient. Pray, go back to your room. Carlos shall take some of these good things round to your window. You cannot be so very hungry now, for I see that you have

nearly finished all that was in my plate. Let me give you some more wine; and now pray be more prudent, and go back to your bed;" and Vernon suffered himself to be pushed back into the bed-room just as the padre's voice was heard as he returned, followed by Carlos and by Barbara, carrying a bundle of ropes. He stopped at the doorway, and, as they passed him, called out,

"Take care and secure him carefully, my children. I saw the poor gentleman seize a knife from the table as I was going out."

"Thanks for your kind exertions, my father," said Sanchez; "but I have already got our patient back to his bed. He seems inclined to sleep: don't disturb him; but go you, Carlos, into the room and watch your master, while we finish our supper."

In the course of the evening Carlos contrived to supply Vernon's wants; and, before he retired to his hammock for the night, the kind old priest cautiously ventured into the bed-room, felt his pulse, and congratulated him upon being now free from fever.

"Sleep and abstinence," he said, "and Bar-

bara's cooling drinks, have done wonders for you, my son. But I hope you will not think of going on to-morrow; your fever might return. Good night."

The next morning Vernon professed to be quite well. Carlos, who had slept with the horses in the stable at the posada, brought a message from the officer commanding the military party which had halted there, presenting his compliments to the captain of the British legion, and expressing his regret at hearing of his illness. He would, he said, have made it a point to call upon him, but that his party were obliged to march so early, that he did not like disturbing him.

Vernon astonished the padre by making a hearty breakfast, and by his resolute refusal to defer his journey to St. Fernando for another day; for he found himself much embarrassed in having to answer the priest's anxious inquiries whether he had met his nephew at Barcelona, and what patriot officers had been killed or wounded in the great battle near the Boca pass. Sanchez, as usual, came to his

aid; but he was glad to be again on horseback, and *en route* for St. Fernando.

The road as they proceeded began to descend from the high land which they had been crossing; and, towards evening, the party reached a rich alluvial valley. Cultivated fields, green with sugar canes or Indian corn, became more frequent; and the setting sun was reflected in the waters of a river, a tributary of the mighty Oronoko, which flows through the town of St. Fernando. After passing for about four miles along the left bank of the river, Vernon and his companions rode through a mean-looking suburb, and, crossing a wooden bridge, reached the plaza on the other side, a large square, where the governor's house was easily distinguished by the flag-staff in front.

It was late in the evening when Colonel Sanchez dismounted at the door, sent in the letter from the mayor of Aragu, and requested to know whether Captain Vernon of the British legion and his secretary could pay their respects to his Excellency.

After some delay, he was told that the go-

vernor would see Captain Vernon at ten o'clock the next morning.

Carlos was then consulted by his masters as to what posada he would recommend for their night's lodging.

He told them there were two in the town, the Columbia, and the Posada del Rio. The first was the best, but it was often full; the other was quieter, and might, he said, (looking significantly) "suit Captain Vernon's health better."

Vernon and Sanchez seemed to be of the same opinion, and told him to show them the way to the house which he recommended. Passing through the principal street, he led the way to a range of detached houses along the river side, at the further extremity of which stood an ancient dilapidated-looking stone house, the shattered fragments of armorial bearings over its gateway showing that it had seen better days; but they had long gone by, and it was now a second-rate public-house, much frequented by country people who came by water to the town, from the convenience of an old jetty, or wharf, in the back yard, where

they secured their boats, and landed their market baskets.

Carlos seemed quite at home, called to an amphibious-looking lad, who was bailing out water from one of the boats at the wharf, to take the horses to the stable, and conducted Vernon and Sanchez up some steps to what had been the back entrance of the house, then through a large gloomy-looking hall, now waste and unfurnished, to two small rooms which had been screened off from the further end, where a table and chairs showed some signs of habitation.

Here he left them, telling them that he would seek the host, and make arrangements for their supper and beds. He was a long time absent, and when he returned, said that the host was ill in bed of fever and ague, and the house in more than usual disorder; but that the hostess would do her best to supply their wants.

"There is some fish now broiling on the kitchen fire for your supper; and here," opening a door into a room further on, "there are, I am told, both a bed and a hammock. I will bring you a lamp when I go back for your

supper; this end of the house is little used; the public room and kitchen are at the other side; the hostess is attending her sick husband, and their pretty daughter, Margarita, is too much engaged to attend to you; so I promised to make her excuses, and wait on you myself. Now I must see whether that young scapegrace, Andres, is taking care of the horses, and by that time the fish will be ready."

"What do you think of that fellow now, Vernon?" said Sanchez, when Carlos took away the supper tray, and left his masters alone for the night.

"As I said before, that he is invaluable, if he is honest."

"Why, as to honestly, probably he never heard the word—certainly could not comprehend it—but faithful he has shown himself as yet; and my confidence that he will continue so increases every day. What tact he has shown in taking us to this house! I quite love him for it."

CHAPTER VI.

At ten the next morning Vernon and Colonel Sanchez kept their appointment with Don Pedro Mendoza, the governor of St. Fernando. They were kept waiting for an hour in an anteroom, during which time they were disagreeably cross-questioned by an inquisitive aid-de-camp.

At last the aid-de-camp left them, to see, as he said, if the governor was disengaged; and on the ringing of a hand-bell from an inner room the door was opened, and they were ushered into the presence of Don Pedro. He was a sickly peevish-looking middle-aged man, with a sharp Jewish physiognomy, cunning gleamed from his long black eyes as he fixed them, first on Vernon, and then on Sanchez, and bowed and motioned to them to sit down opposite to the only window in the room.

"I have read Señor Nunez's letter; he tells me, Captain Vernon, that the object of your

visit is to procure horses— I cannot understand this— Aragu was a better place for your purpose. You left the breeding districts behind you when you came on."

"I am sorry to hear, sir, that we have been so misled."

"How comes it Captain Vernon, that you, an officer of the British legion, are not in uniform, in the gay green regimentals that I have heard so much of?"

"It is not the custom of English officers to dress in uniform when away from their regiments," interposed Colonel Sanchez, who saw that Vernon's tell-tale face was getting flushed. "Excuse my interruption, Captain Vernon speaks Spanish with difficulty, as you see."

"Well then Mr. Secretary, may I ask to see your passports, I have no doubt they are all right, but I always make it a rule. No; not this, sir, this is only from my friend the corregidor of Aragu, I mean the first, that which you must have got at Cumana, either from General Bolivar or General Sir Gregor M'Gregor."

"It was left at Barcelona, governor, as of no further use."

"That was unlucky, Mr. Secretary; well then let me see that from the governor of Barcelona which protected you as far as Aragu."

Sanchez produced it, and winced internally as he observed the governor examine it closely, and hold it for a moment up to the light as if he had detected the erasure.

"It is all right sir," said Don Pedro as he returned it. "I am familiar with Don Diego's handwriting. You lodge, I think you told me, at the posada del Rio; you were misled in going there, you should have taken up your quarters at the better house, the Columbia. Captain Vernon, I will do all I can to assist you; come and dine with me the day after to-morrow, by which time I hope that I shall be able to give you more satisfactory intelligence."

And he shook hands with an appearance of some cordiality with the Captain of the legion, honoured Sanchez with a bow and a smile, and wished them both good morning. For a few minutes neither of the friends said anything as they walked back to their inn; both were dis-

pirited and alarmed, and each seemed afraid to hear from the other a confirmation of his own misgivings. At last Vernon broke silence.

"I did not like those questions Sanchez, and the way in which the passport was scrutinised."

"And I still more distrust the sudden change in the man's manner; he seemed to have made up his mind all at once; and then the Judas smile that he gave us at parting. He thinks that he has us safe for some days; our horses will be the better for another day's rest; but then we must escape before the net is closed around us. Alas! that the royal troops have left Ciudad Real."

When they reached the posada Carlos was absent. Margarita brought in their evening meal. Carlos, she said, had promised her to return in time to attend their Honours' supper, but he had not done so, and Andres, the stable-boy, told her that he had seen him in the governor's yard, talking to one of the servants, and had observed him go in at the back door of the governor's house: he had not since been seen or heard of.

The supper was removed; hour after hour

passed away, the night was advanced, and still no Carlos appeared.

Colonel Sanchez was overwhelmed with anxiety; his spirits and courage gave way at last, and he felt that he had sacrificed his friend's safety to his own blind confidence, his instinct as he had called it; and with tears in his eyes he entreated Vernon to surrender him to the republican authorities, and thus save him the misery of having sacrificed his benefactor's life as well as his own.

It was impossible, he urged, that both could now escape; but Vernon would be saved, who had already risked so much in the vain attempt to interpose between his friend and destiny.

Vernon hardly did justice to the self-devotion of Sanchez: he was too angry with him for suggesting such conduct, and rejected the offer with scorn and horror.

"Very well, my dear Vernon, I see that you will not relieve the bitterness of my remorse; but my mind is made up; you cannot stop me from going to this rebel governor to-morrow morning and confessing all; this will save you. My life will satiate the blood-hounds, and they

will not dare to touch you; the fear of your glorious country will protect you."

Suddenly Carlos burst into the room, looking eager and excited. Colonel Sanchez rushed forward, "Villain! I have you then!" he said as he seized his arm with the grasp of a smith's vice; in another moment he would have dashed him to the ground and trampled him under foot, but that his passion was quelled by the unflinching eye and undaunted countenance with which Carlos submitted to his violence; he stood quiet for a moment, looking first at Sanchez and then at Vernon, his voice was low and distinct, as he then said, —

"I come to save you — let go my arm and hear me. I know all you would conceal, who you really are — I have long discovered it; and if you had confided in me, you would have saved yourselves much of this uneasiness. I followed you to-day to the governor's, and got my old fellow-servant, Munez, to tell me all that passed there. You are more than suspected; an express to General Bolivar, at Cumana, has been sent off this very evening. I waited to try and find out its contents, but I could not succeed;

the governor tells every thing to his wife, and she repeats much to her waiting woman, and in former days when I lived at the house, I could coax the pretty mulatto to tell me any thing I wanted, but to-night I failed. I called in as I passed the Columbia posada to hear any news, and found that a party of three horsemen, and their servants, had just arrived from Aragu; one of them is the alguacil Francisco; they have despatches for the governor, and make no secret that they are in pursuit of Colonel Sanchez, an escaped prisoner, and a young Englishman who has aided him in his flight. And now make what haste you can; get together what things you wish to take with you. Not a moment is to be lost. I have secured the key of the padlock which fastens the chain of our host's canoe to the wharf behind the house, and have stored her with provisions for a week's voyage. I got hold of the key of the larder; it was fortunately fuller than usual; if we elude pursuit I can conceal you in safety with my mother's tribe — but as you value your lives make haste."

As Carlos finished speaking, Colonel San-

chez let go his arm, took his hand and thanked him, in the few words for which there was time, for his watchful fidelity and the skill with which he had planned their escape.

"It is admirable, Vernon, is it not?"

"But, Sanchez, the boat and the provisions, ought we to steal them?"

"Don't disturb yourself on that account, Captain, interposed Carlos; recollect that you leave two good horses and a mule in the stable; they are worth ten times what we take; but for God's sake make haste; I will carry your valise. Colonel, don't forget your pistols — this way — more softly. How bright the moonlight is — conceal yourselves for a moment in the shadow of that wall. I must run back to the house — shame on me, I had forgotten —"

As Carlos ran back, Vernon whispered to Colonel Sanchez: — "Can he have gone to call a guard to seize us? The proofs of our attempt to escape would be evidence enough to justify our imprisonment, if all this story were a fiction. Had we not better go back to the house?"

"No, don't stir; if he had meant treachery, he would not have put my pistols into my hand;

and see, they are still loaded, the priming untouched too. Look there! he reappears, bringing with him a gun and a large bundle — he motions us to the canoe — let us follow. Mind how you get in, or you will upset it — there now, sit down."

"Silence!" whispered Carlos, as he pushed off the boat. "I heard steps over head in the sick host's chamber—the women are still awake. The splash of our paddles might attract notice, the canoe must be suffered to drift."

The canoe glided slowly and noiselessly down the mid current of the river, guided by a single paddle, which Carlos, seated at the stern, dipped softly into the water. Not a word was said till a bend of the river shut out the town.

Vernon and Colonel Sanchez were each, according to their different forms, returning thanks to Providence. Carlos first broke silence.

"We may now use the paddles. You must assist, Señors."

Vernon and Sanchez each took a paddle, and exerted themselves under the directions of Carlos in this new labour. They were vigor-

ous if not skilful, and, aided by the current, the canoe darted rapidly along.

The moon was high and bright, and threw a long line of waving silver light on the river. The country was at first open; but, as they proceeded, the banks on each side were shut in by dark dense forests, their gloomy recesses lit up by the large lantern fire-fly, seeming the scene of some fairy revel.

It was midnight, but the wilderness was full of its peculiar sounds; the loud croak of the trumpet bull frog was answered by the hollow note of the tree toad; a large beetle, called a razor grinder, mingled its harsh call with the chirping of innumerable grasshoppers, while owls and night hawks hooted and screamed as they flew past. Multitudes of bats darted across the river, preying on the swarms of mosquitoes which were hovering in clouds over the water.

All night these wild sounds continued, but they suddenly ceased on the break of day; the noisome reptiles, and the blood-thirsty vampires sleep while the sun is up, the mosquito alone

never ceases its persecution — night or day it never rests unless gorged with blood.

The morning sun rose hot and oppressive over the green forest, and glittered on the ripples of the mid river; but the left bank remained in shade, and here the fugitives continued their incessant toil.

Carlos knew the river almost as well as he did the road; of course, pursuit was to be apprehended, and the route they had taken would be too evident to be mistaken; the missing canoe, and the plundered larder, would all betray their purpose; they had, they believed, a good six or eight hours start of any boat sent after them, and they resolved that they would continue their progress till noon, then choose some good hiding-place in the forest, where they might land and take rest and food.

When the lessening shadows of the forest trees disappeared, and the sun stood high over head, Carlos steered the canoe to the right bank of the river, and then guided it through some tall water reeds and bulrushes, which completely screened the mouth of a small creek.

Here it was drawn up, and Vernon and Sanchez threw themselves down under the shade of a mahogany tree, while they watched, with no small interest, the preparations of Carlos.

First he spread two deer skins on the ground; then produced a basket, from which he took a cold roast quarter of kid, a ham, and a loaf of bread; two knives, a bottle of brandy, and two horn drinking cups; he then filled a jar with water from the river, and regarding his arrangements with a satisfied look, called to his masters that their breakfast was ready."

"Nay, Carlos," said Vernon, "share it with us; we are equals now."

"No, Señors, I had rather help myself when you have finished your meal; you will have to rest here till evening, so do not hurry yourselves. I have some coffee in the canoe, but I do not yet dare to kindle a fire: smoke is the only thing which would betray our encampment."

"Don't distress yourself, Carlos," said Sanchez, mixing a spoonful of brandy with his cup of water; "your fare is excellent, and you

were providing this while I believed that you were selling our lives."

"It was quite natural, Señor, that you should think so: I should have thought so myself in your place."

"Now tell me, Carlos, for we have had no time yet to understand each other, and tell me truly, when did you first suspect our disguise?"

"From the day I took service with you: the way in which you rejected the horses which you professed to want, first excited my curiosity. Then I saw an acquaintance of mine that evening at Aragu, a wounded soldier, who had just returned from Barcelona, and he told me a story of an escape of an officer of the royalists just as he was going to be shot, and a foreigner with him; and how a great reward was offered for their apprehension. I was then very suspicious; but still I was not sure, so I watched you closely, and I became quite certain when you went to the padre's house instead of meeting the military at the posada. I saw that you trusted me, Colonel Sanchez: I over-

heard you say so, and I liked you, and wished to be true to you."

"And did you never think about the reward offered for our apprehension?"

"Oh, yes, to be sure I did; and if I had hoped to get it, perhaps — but no, I knew that I should only help some of the greedy government officials to the dollars. I was not fool enough to suppose that they would share them with a poor devil like me; they would have used me as they do their hounds — I might run down the deer, but not a morsel of the venison would come to my share. I should be whipped off if I presumed to ask for it."

"And you were wise, Carlos, for you have laid us under obligations which we will amply repay, only tell me what we can do for you."

"Trust to me, Señors, until you are safe.— Now you had better try and sleep, while I keep watch here on all that may pass down the river."

Vernon followed Sanchez's example, and rolling himself in the deer skin to protect him from the swarms of mosquitoes, soon forgot his past dangers, and slept for many hours; his

wild dreams of Jamaica and Emily Vivian were dispelled by Carlos, who awoke the sleepers to tell them that he heard the distant sound of oars coming down the river.

They crept near the water's edge, and lay down behind some shrubs, which concealed them, through which they could see the river.

A large boat, impelled by six oars, was coming rapidly down. She had the tri-colour flag at the stern, and seemed to be in government employment.

As she approached, the half-uniform of the person who was steering, and the fire-arms on which several of the men seated near him were leaning, left no doubt as to their character and object.

"Look!" whispered Carlos; "there is that fellow Francisco, the alguacil from Aragu, perched up in the bows of the boat, and looking about him like a vulture in search of prey."

The boat came close down the right or west bank of the stream, which cast a shade from the evening sun, and approached very

near to the spot where the objects of its chase lay concealed.

At a motion from the officer who was steering, the rowers suddenly stopped; the noise which they had hitherto occasioned ceased, and the fugitives could hear much of what was spoken.

"Is not the creek that you told me of somewhere hereabouts, Juan?" said the officer to one of the men near him.

The man looked doubtfully, paused, and then replied,—

"I think it should be here. I know there was a large mahogany tree near it—just such a one as that."

"No, you are wrong, Juan," interrupted one of the boatmen; "the creek is a good bit further on, and the mahogany tree is not near as big a one as that. I landed there, and made a fire under it, many years ago, when I was out on a fishing excursion."

"I can't waste time searching if you are not quite sure where this creek is, Juan. I don't myself think these runaways would hide so near. We must get to the fort, if possible,

before they pass it. Go on! Give way, rowers."

During the two minutes which this conversation lasted, a cold perspiration burst from Vernon's forehead. Colonel Sanchez felt his hand tremble as he groped for his pistols, but dared not draw them from his belt, lest the slightest motion should shake the bushes under which he crouched; and Carlos gasped for breath, and prayed to his patron saint. They were all brave men; but the prospect of being shot in their lair, like hunted beasts, was too appalling for even their nerves.

Meanwhile the oars again splashed, and the boat disappeared round a bend of the river.

Carlos crossed himself as he rose from his hiding-place.

"It is strange, Señor," said he to Sanchez, "how religious fear makes people. I have not said a prayer, or crossed myself, since the day I was sent to prison on the accusation of making free with a traveller's saddle-bags, and that was two years ago. Well, I will repent, and lead a new life, one of these days. Now I will go and load the canoe, for you had

better embark in an hour's time; now that accursed boat—God forgive me for swearing —(here he crossed himself again) has passed us, we are in no danger of further alarm."

"What fort is that," asked Vernon, "that the officer spoke of?"

"Why, there is an old fort at the mouth of this river, on the point of land which runs out just before you reach the Oronoko. There used to be a guard there in old times, but it has long since been withdrawn. The place was uninhabited the last time I passed it, and looked ruined and forlorn; but that was a year ago. It may be re-occupied now; and, even if it be not, the crew of that boat may be in it, waiting for us. The river is very narrow there."

The party re-embarked, and held on their weary way until near midnight. They passed many openings in the woods, where cleared tracts, and distant houses scattered round some tall church, tantalised them with a prospect of rest which they dared not venture on.

Near these openings they sometimes passed a ferry-boat, usually a flat-bottomed scow, look-

ing like a huge box, with flaps hanging down on each side, conveying passengers, horses, and cattle, across the river.

They avoided coming too near any of these floating bridges, or the boats or canoes which occasionally passed them; and when they could not avoid a passing question, they described themselves as officers of the patriot army, on their way to Ciudad Real.

There seemed no longer any need for speed in their flight; and Vernon and Sanchez relieved each other in turn: one rested, while the other paddled.

Night had long closed in, when Carlos announced that they had arrived at their intended resting-place. It was again in the forest; the canoe was unloaded and drawn up a sandy brook, Carlos taking care to obliterate the track it had made on the sand, and concealing it under some bushes.

He could now, he said, venture to light a fire, which would not only cook their supper, but the smoke would keep off the mosquitoes. They supped luxuriously, and slept soundly,

having arranged their deer skins close to the fire.

The sun had risen when Vernon and Sanchez were startled from their sleep by the report of a gun not far off. They looked round for Carlos, but he was not to be seen; in a few minutes he re-appeared.

"There," he said, throwing down three ducks; "that was a fortunate shot. I wanted to prove my new gun. I bought it from that rascal Andres, the night that we left St. Fernando; I mean it is a present to the chief of my mother's tribe; in the meanwhile, it may do us good service in killing game."

"Or assisting us to force our way past the fort you were talking of, if we find it garrisoned."

"No, no, Señor, that won't do; we cannot force our way there; but we shall, I hope, be able to steal past. Once on the Oronoko we are safe."

"May we not know your plans, my good Carlos?"

"Oh, yes, my masters; first I will get ready your breakfast, then we will embark

again and drop slowly down the river; no hurry. We shall get near this fort early in the night, and before the moon rises I will make fast our canoe at a bend of the river, just above the fort. You will remain in it, Señors, but I will creep forward through the bushes, and see if the fort is occupied; and if it is, how we may hope to drop down the stream, and pass unobserved."

The voyagers breakfasted, re-embarked, and pursued their flight. At noon they met two canoes full of Indians, who were taking deer skins, net hammocks, cassareep, and the beautiful baskets which their women weave from split reeds, and some unhappy-looking half-tamed parrots and macaws, to barter at St. Fernando, for powder, and shot, and fish-hooks.

Carlos steered his canoe close to theirs, and held a long conversation with them, in the Indian language; quite unintelligible to his European companions. He bought some cassada bread from them, and they then paddled on.

"Are those Indians of your own tribe, Carlos?"

"No, Colonel, but they are neighbours and friends; it is fortunate we met them, for they told me that they passed my mother's people, who were on their way to encamp on the Irribi creek; it is the season when the mamre fish are plentiful there."

"Have your mother's tribe no fixed abode, then?" asked Vernon.

"Not what you consider as such; still they have their bounds. They always make their camp, in the rainy season, on the prairies, behind the headland of Mahica, where the deer are then plentiful; and they never wander further eastward from thence than a five or six days' voyage, or they would trespass on the hunting grounds of the tribe which we have just passed. Nor do they venture more than a week's journey to the westward, or they would encounter the hostile tribe of the Tocoras."

"And how far do they wander southward, from the banks of the Oronoko; the great river, as you call it?"

"I cannot tell; as far as the game or the fish in the creek may tempt them."

"Are your tribe numerous?"

"No. The old men tell us that the Wuranas were once a powerful people, descended from the Arrawaaks, who dwell on the sea coast, far away to the south-west; but war and the diseases they bring back to the woods, when they go to the white man's towns, have wasted their numbers; they cannot now count more than thirty families."

Carlos seemed gratified by the interest taken by his masters in Indian life; and he was encouraged to go on.

He told all sorts of hunting adventures, which would once have made Vernon rejoice at the prospect of the wild life about to be forced upon him.

Night came on, and Carlos at first urged his companions to speed on the canoe until they reached a turn in the river. "We are now," he said, "very near the mouth of the river; take in your paddles. We must be as silent as death. Hark! do you not hear the distant noise of rushing waters? It is the stream of this river, where it meets and mingles with the Oronoko; there is a bar there, on which the surf rises as the currents meet."

"But the fort, Carlos?"

"Is now very near; I still hope that it may not be occupied, though I fear that it must be; but that I shall soon discover."

The canoe was turned to the east bank of the river, and made fast to the roots of some mangrove trees, which grew at its edge. Carlos landed, and was soon lost sight of in the darkness of the night. He was more than an hour away, and when he did return, there was something disheartening in his slow irresolute step (for it was too dark to see his countenance) which added to the anxiety of his companions.

"Your intelligence is unfavourable," exclaimed Vernon and Sanchez, at the same moment.

"It is so, Señors: the large boat which pursued us yesterday, is now moored close under the fort. They have made her fast to the old pier; and there she is, afloat in the deep water, and ready to slip out in a moment. Two of the men are on board her, and the rest are in the fort, which looks full of people. I dared not go near, but I recognised the voice (I shall never forget it!) of that officer who alarmed

us so; and then there is that greedy Francisco, sitting on the pier, with his head turned peering up the river. I almost fancied that I saw his hawk's eyes glaring at me through the darkness, just as he looked when I thought that he discovered me yesterday, through the bushes under the mahogany tree."

"How wide is the river, opposite the fort?" asked Sanchez.

"The deep water under the fort is very narrow; the bar I told you of, is on the opposite side; but I should not like to cross it, even by daylight, in this light canoe; and now, in the dark, it would be impossible."

"Shall we try this desperate venture, Vernon, for I will be guided by you, or shall we take to the woods?" asked Sanchez. "We must decide quickly, before the moon rises.

Vernon did not answer; he so disliked either alternative, that he could not resolve on the instant.

Carlos broke the painful silence by saying, "There is yet another resource left by which we may evade these bloodhounds; but it must be very fatiguing, and may be dangerous.

In former days there was a narrow track through the wood behind us which crossed the neck of land on which the fort stands, and so led round to the great river, which it reaches at a safe distance below the fort. I knew it well once; for I have crossed this way when I was a boy, and when those whom I was with had their reasons for wishing to avoid examination. This canoe is very light: the whole distance may be about half a league; we may carry it across."

"Let us try this track, then, at once, my dear Sanchez," said Vernon, his mind much relieved at the proposal.

"Not yet," said Carlos; "we must wait an hour longer, till the moon rises. I could not find the track without her light; but if you have resolved to attempt it, we will move the canoe back to a spot higher up on this side of the river;" and he poled the canoe up the stream, and stopped opposite the decayed trunk of a large cotton tree.

"Ay, here the portage used to be," he said; "I remember that old tree well. You must now land, Señors, while I draw up the

canoe and unload her. How fortunately it has turned out that I took this light canoe, instead of the heavy row-boat that was lying next her at the wharf of our posada."

By the time the boat was unloaded, the moon rose, and shed her yellow light over the dark forest. Carlos took his gun and a part of the provisions, and left Vernon and Sanchez making their supper on the remainder, while he went forward alone to explore the path. In another hour he returned.

He had traced the old track, he said, with some difficulty. It was now more overgrown with vines and bushes than it used to be; but still he had no doubt that they could carry the canoe through to the Oronoko. He had been afraid, he added, that he might find its termination at the side of the great river watched; but there was no one there, and it was evident that their pursuers did not know of its existence.

The light canoe, formed out of the hollowed trunk of a single tree, was inverted, and carried like a bier on the shoulders of the three fugitives, with less fatigue than they had anti-

cipated. The moon was bright, and the forest air cool; the distance about an English mile. Still they had often to put down their load, to clear the way from the net-like vines which obstructed them, or drag it along the ground where the boughs crossed the way. At last the narrow path suddenly opened, and the vast Oronoko was before them: its dark waters, glancing bright in the moon-beams as far as the eye could reach, looked like an inland sea.

"How grand! how glorious!" said Vernon, as he stood on the spot where he had laid down his burden.

"Yes, it is a noble river," replied Sanchez, "and I am heartily glad to see it. But, just now, I feel more immediate interest in the arrangements which Carlos is making for us. See, the careful fellow has unrolled our deer skins, and placed the drinking cups and flask of brandy beside them. He invites us to rest, and enjoy ourselves with our cigars, while he goes back to bring the paddles and the rest of our valuables; and I am both tired and thirsty. Come, leave the river and the moon; you will soon have more than enough of them; for of course

we must launch the canoe again, and get away before sunrise. Three hours ago I really thought that cunning Francisco would have got back the doubloons which I borrowed from his master."

CHAPTER VII.

THE canoe was again freighted and launched; the north bank was disappearing in the distance, when the sun rose from the waters of the Oronoko, and disclosed the vast size of the river. The south bank was scarcely visible, and all around was one wide expanse of turbid yellow water, rolling onwards with a mighty stream.

The three companions, who were borne down its current, were each silent, and occupied with his own thoughts. Vernon's, probably, had wandered back to Jamaica, and those of Sanchez to Spain; those of Carlos, if he ever indulged in self-observation, which we do not venture to affirm, might have found matter of surprise in the change which a few days had wrought on him.

When he in part confessed to Colonel Sanchez that he did hesitate at St. Fernando whether he would not betray them, and claim the of-

fered reward, he did not tell the whole of what had then passed within him. He had refrained from treachery, partly because he more than doubted, as he confessed, whether any of the reward would reach him. He had, besides, found out that his employers' purses were full; and his active wit had suggested to him, that, if he could get the wanderers once to his tribe and to the wilderness, he would have them in his power, and much of that gold should be his, either by force or fraud. Such had been the schemes of his unprincipled mind; but they were so no longer.

A change had come over it. He felt that he could not now wrong his fellow-travellers; especially, that he could not be unfaithful to Sanchez, whose kindly trusting manner had won all the heart which he possessed.

He never had met with either kindness or confidence before during his whole life. It was a new and delightful feeling; and he loved Sanchez with the devotion and fidelity of a dog.

Superstition, for we dare not dignify his ill-taught impulse with the name of religion, had

added force to his better resolutions. He had vowed to his patron saint, whose aid he invoked in the extremity of terror under the mahogany tree, that if he escaped that peril he would be true and faithful.

Carlos first broke this silence, by pointing to a bank of clouds, which was rising in the north-east.

"We shall have rain before noon; those clouds threaten a thunder storm. We must cross as speedily as we can; for if the storm brings wind with it, this canoe would not be safe amongst the waves which will arise in the mid channel."

Thus urged, Vernon and Sanchez laboured unremittingly with the paddles. The south bank of the river, rising in low hills and indented with woody headlands, was approached. Meanwhile the clouds had overspread the heavens, the wind rose, flashes of lightning, and the distant roar of thunder, showed that the storm was rapidly coming. Heavy rain began to fall, and the opposition between the wind and the current of the stream covered the broad river with short uneasy waves, which

broke over the canoe, half filling it with water, frequently delaying all progress by the necessity of bailing it out.

The shore offered no shelter; houses there were none, and no trees could give protection from the thunder rain which was pouring down. The party, therefore, continued on their way, coasting the shore, and borne slowly onwards, rather by the current than by their own exertions.

In the afternoon the storm passed away; the sun re-appeared, and gradually dried their clothes; but it was too late, Carlos told them, to reach Iribi creek that day.

All felt overcome with fatigue and want of sleep, and gladly acquiesced in his proposal to land. The canoe was drawn up under the shelter of a head-land, a fire kindled, and food and rest were obtained and enjoyed.

The next morning the sun had risen high before Vernon and Sanchez awoke from the deep sleep induced by the fatigue and anxiety of the last twenty-four hours. Carlos was absent; he had told them that he would try and shoot some game, as, excepting a little

cassada bread, their provisions were nearly expended. It was long before he returned, bringing with him a powie (a sort of wild turkey), a guana, and two pigeons ; he had, he said, missed a deer, owing to his powder being damp, and his gun hanging fire.

This needful supply of food was then to be roasted at their fire, so that it was near noon before they were again on the river.

It was a still, hot day, making the fatigue of paddling intolerable ; so Carlos steered towards the middle of the river, where the current was strongest, and bore the canoe onwards, at the rate of three or four miles an hour, but required his constant skill and attention, as steersman, to prevent its being spun round in the eddies and small whirlpools which dimpled the broad expanse, reminding Sanchez of his boyish days, when he used to watch the walnut shells, which he had launched on the Guadalquivir, performing the same gyrations.

As soon as the evening shadows began to mitigate the reflection of the sunshine on the water, the canoe was again guided to the south side, and crept along under the shade of its banks.

About two hours before sunset, they arrived at the entrance of the Iribi creek. Here Vernon and Sanchez landed, while Carlos, wading in the creek, pushed and lifted the canoe over the rocks and sandbank which the stream, in the rainy season, had rolled down to its mouth. They formed a bar, over which its copper-coloured waters, swollen with yesterday's rain were fretting their noisy way to the Oronoko.

Higher up, the creek was narrow and deep, and required continued efforts to force the canoe up its winding course, against a rapid current.

The banks were steep, and generally closed in by forests. Here and there an open space showed some former Indian camping ground, where the large trees had been cut for firewood, or to construct temporary dwellings.

"My people," said Carlos, "have pitched their camp higher up the creek than usual; if, indeed, they are here, and those Tamokas have not misled me."

"Hark!" said Vernon; "is not that the bark of a dog?"

"You are right, Señor, and see — a thin blue smoke is curling over that turn in the

creek; the camp must be there, and the women are cooking their pepper-pots, in readiness for the return of their husbands. I will find out my mother's hut, and take you there; she is always supplied with everything that Indian life affords, for she is the doctoress of the tribe. Some of the medicines which remained in her possession after my father's long illness and death, and which she happened to bring with her when she rejoined the tribe, have produced such wonderful effects, sometimes curing and sometimes killing her patients, that she is cherished or feared by them all; she is old and cross-tempered, poor woman, but she will do anything that I ask her. See: there is the camp, and there is that old love of mine, Mora, with one child tottering after her, and another on her back, coming down to the creek to fill her water jar; how old-looking and ugly she has grown!"

The straggling line of huts composing the Indian village was now reached, the canoe run on shore, and, while Carlos was talking in the language of the tribe, to the object of his former affection, Vernon gazed on a new scene.

Ten or twelve huts stood in a line close to the bank of the stream; they were long open sheds, supported by carved poles, and thatched with leaves. Some were open on all sides; others only in front, or at one end. Some of these dwellings were more than twenty feet in length, and most of them about twelve feet in breadth.

Grass hammocks, in which the Indians always sleep, were suspended from the rafters, in which a few of the old men and some of the women who were sick, were lying; and between the rafters and the thatch were collections of all kinds of valuables; bows and arrows, fish spears, canoe paddles, guns, nets, cassareep jars, cooking utensils, cassada bread, dried meat, and a variety of other articles, were all stored together.

In the spaces between the dwellings fires had been kindled in round holes in the ground, where large black earthen pots, swung from a triangle of three sticks, were simmering, watched by nearly naked women, who, every now and then, lifted the lid and stirred up the steaming mess with a wooden spoon, surrounded by

children quite naked, of all ages, from the crawling infant to boys and girls of ten years old. The girls were squatting beside their mothers over the fires, and the boys proving their skill in archery, with tiny bows and bulrush arrows. Very few men were to be seen. Some small, ugly black dogs, with peculiarly large ears, barked at the strangers. The women did not appear to have much of the curiosity ascribed to their sex; few stood up from their employment, most of them just turned their heads, as they said something to Carlos, and then went on with their cooking.

The dwelling of Xaltalma, the mother of Carlos, was one of those which was enclosed on all sides by a screen of leaves, woven into a sort of mat, between the poles; so arranged as to be partly removable, to serve as windows, and to be closed against rain or night air. Her residence in the towns of the white man had made her fastidious. She was old and withered, with an unquiet eye and a shrill scolding voice, and had few remains of the beauty which had captivated the father of Carlos. She was dressed in a loose gown

and petticoat, and wore a red silk handkerchief wound round her head like a turban.

She appeared to Vernon to be but little excited at the re-appearance of her son, who talked to her long and earnestly, in her own language. He pointed often to him and to Sanchez, and seemed urging her to do something which she did not approve of; so at least Vernon supposed from her dissatisfied look. In time she seemed mollified, and at last addressed her guests in indifferent Spanish.

"You are welcome, Señors, to my poor hut. My son has told me that you have promised to reward him richly for the protection which you have been driven to seek. If the white men, who are hunting for your life, should discover you here, they would take a merciless revenge on our tribe; but my son was always rash, like his father before him. We must tell some other story to the chief; there is his canoe coming down the creek."

Two canoes had just then arrived, full of men, some carrying guns and others fish-spears. Several of the women ran out, and crowded round them, and carried off fish or

game, as it was handed out to them by the men, who now scattered to their different houses, leaving their wives to draw up the canoes, and put away the paddles and fish-spears.

Carlos accosted the chief, the oldest looking of the party, and they talked long together, using much gesticulation; he then returned to his mother's hut. The chief, he said, had been afraid that the strangers had come to the camp to force them to take part in the civil war; and was so pleased to hear that they were not government agents, that he would give them a hospitable reception. "I told him," he added, "that my mother's cooking-pot was not filled for so large a party, and he has invited us to share his. Come, they will not wait for you."

Carlos led the way to one of the largest of the huts. It was open on all sides, and four or five naked men, their tawny skin fresh oiled for the occasion, were squatting on the ground round a large black pot. They did not rise; but the chief grunted, and motioned to his guests to take places in the circle opposite to him.

Two or three women stood behind to wait

on their husbands, and handed round cassada cakes and wooden spoons.

The chief then raised the lid of the pot, and let out a most savoury steam. Diving into its contents, he fished up the stew, and ladled it into earthen platters and calabash shells, which were handed round by the women to their lords.

The mess consisted of venison, fish, land tortoises, guanas, crawfish, powies and ducks; all cut up and stewed together in cassareep, and well seasoned with wild pepper. It only wanted the addition of salt, which an Indian cannot get, to make it a feast for a London alderman.

The rich brown cassareep (the juice of the cassada boiled down to a jelly-like consistency) not only imparts its own delicious flavour to the meat, but preserves it from tainting; and a South American Indian's pepper-pot is seldom emptied. Like the Heidelberg tun, it is constantly replenished, and never dies a natural death; it is kept alive until the accidents to which, sooner or later, every thing fragile is subject, destroy the earthen-ware exterior.

Knives were not used, and forks were un-

known; the meat was torn by the hands and teeth of the guests, when it adhered to the bones, and the smaller morsels gulped down with the assistance of the spoon.

No one spoke while the meal lasted; then the great black pot was removed by the women, and pipes and tobacco were handed down from a corner of the rafters. The pipes were, perhaps, such as were used in the times of Raleigh; a hollow stone formed the bowl, and a reed the stem. The tobacco was a mixture, in which the genuine nicotia was adulterated with other herbs.

When the pipes were lighted the women withdrew, and conversation commenced, in which Carlos joined, but which, of course, was unintelligible to Vernon and Sanchez. They soon left the circle, receiving as they caught his eye a valedictory grunt from their host, who was smoking and listening to some long story, probably all fiction, from Carlos.

They adjourned to Xaltalma's habitation, and found the old woman alone, and indulging herself in a luxury which never before had found its way to the Iribi creek. She

had kindled a small fire in the centre of the hut, and seated beside it on a low three-legged stool, (for she was proud of her civilisation, and would not squat on the ground, she used to say, "like her heathen sisters, poor ignorant things,") she was pouring out a clear dark fluid, the aroma of which perfumed the hut as it issued from a long tin cooking utensil: she was making coffee!

She rose to receive her guests, pointed to an old carved chest, evidently of no Indian origin, and requested them to sit down. She had, she said, been removing the contents of their canoe to her house; she pointed to their valises, which were stowed away on the rafters over their hammocks, and had found the supply of coffee which Carlos had carried away when he emptied the storeroom of the posada at St. Fernando, and which the continued hurry of the flight had hitherto saved from use.

"It is ten years and more since I tasted coffee. I thought you might like some when you came back from your uncomfortable supper with those poor untaught creatures. I was just tasting it, and it is so good, and puts me so in

mind of old times, when my dear kind husband used to bring me the best on his return with his mules to my happy home in Aragu."

Sanchez looked on Vernon and smiled, for Carlos had told them that his father used to beat his mother so often that she was always threatening to run away from him to her tribe and the woods; then civilisation, such as she experienced it, seemed hateful to her; now it was deeply regretted. Xaltalma did not differ from the rest of the world.

"The coffee is refreshing, and we are much obliged to you," said Vernon, holding out his drinking cup; "but I assure you that our supper was excellent. To be sure we had not the pleasure of conversing with our host as we have now with you."

"You did not lose much, Señor; the chief, for one who has lived only in the woods, has some little knowledge, but the other men can talk of nothing but fishing and shooting. Did you ever see such miserable slaves as the women? They wear no clothes, never eat or sit down with their husbands, and when the camp moves they carry all the loads on their backs like so

many mules; but they were reared to it, and know no better. My Carlos was very near condescending to marry that poor Mora, and I thought it might be pleasant to have her to wait on me, as would have been her duty of course; but he thought better of it, and now I hope that some day he will marry a girl with a few dollars in his father's town, and take to the mules again. I might then go back and live with him, if I could persuade these poor people to spare me."

"You are their physician, Carlos tells me," said Sanchez.

"Yes; not only my own people, but the neighbouring tribe of the Tamokas all seek the wise Xaltalma's aid when they fall sick. I cured our chief when that old impostor, Takiti, had prophesied his death; since then, I have only to threaten to return to the towns to obtain any thing that I want; they carry about for me my house and my furniture,"—here she glanced with satisfaction at her three-legged stool and wooden chest, — "bring me the best of their fish and their venison, and make their foolish wives wait on me, so that I cannot make up

my mind to leave them." She said this with the air of a martyr who was sacrificing herself to a sense of duty.

Carlos had just entered the hut, and while he was busy arranging his masters' hammocks for the night, had listened to his mother's self-applause.

Like most vain people, he could not bear to see his own conceit reflected from another person, and he reminded his mother that if, with her white powder she had cured the chief when his eyes were yellow, his tongue brown, and his skin burning, she had also given so much of the black liquid to relieve the spasms of Oeosko, that, though he slept, he never awoke. "Nay, mother," he added, "don't get angry: I would not say so to the tribe; I am not such a fool as to lessen your influence there, but these gentlemen know better; and now, Señors, would you like a hunting expedition? Some of the tribe, who were fishing to-day high up the creek, have tracked some deer; to-morrow they mean to pursue them, will you join? I told the chief that I thought you would like to see it."

The next morning Xaltalma prepared an early breakfast of coffee, cassada bread, and roasted tortoise eggs for her guests, and soon after they took their places in one of four canoes which were setting off for the deer hunt. The chief and eight of his people were all that were selected for the expedition, the other Indians went down to fish on the Oronoko.

The ascent of the creek was slow and toilsome; they could have reached the spot to which the deer had been tracked more easily on foot, but the canoes were necessary to bring home the venison.

After some hours' hard work, the party drew their canoes ashore, where a wide expanse of prairie lay open on the right bank of the stream.

Vernon and Sanchez had no guns, but Carlos was proud to display his to his Indian kindred: of these only four carried guns; the chief and the four others were equipped with bows and arrows.

They crossed the prairie in a southerly direction, and, making their way through long

grass and swampy ground, covered with reeds and rushes, reached the skirts of a wood.

Here the party divided; three of the Indians who had guns, and one with a bow and arrows, entered the wood, and were soon out of sight.

The chief, with one of his own people, accompanied by Vernon, Sanchez, and Carlos, took up a position under cover of some trees, interspersed with guava bushes, on one side of a long green vista which opened from the wood, and crouched down in their ambush.

The remaining four hunters hid themselves behind some wild canes on the opposite side of the opening; all the party remained motionless.

Nothing for a while broke the silence of the still noon of the wilderness, but a flock of green parroquets, who were screaming amidst the guava bushes, and the plaintive cry of the keskadee from a cashew tree close by.

Then suddenly the hollow sound of a distant church-bell seemed to float down the breeze. Vernon started, and turned an inquiring look to Sanchez; the sound was repeated, and

seemed nearer, as it rang clear and distinct, like the tolling of a village church in his distant English home.

He knew that no town, no village, "where holy bell hath knoll'd to church," was within a hundred miles of the forests which surrounded him; yet there again it sounded, apparently not a mile off. Sanchez smiled as he whispered, —

"It is the bell-bird. I, too, was as much astonished as you are when I first heard its strange note."

The grasp of the chief's hand on his shoulder rebuked this breach of silence, and all again was still.

Presently the distant report of three guns, fired almost simultaneously, was heard from the forest in front.

A pause ensued, and then a herd of six deer came rushing down the opening, and another, wounded, was struggling on behind them.

Carlos fired at the stag who was foremost, but his hand shook, and he missed his aim; an arrow from the chief's bow flew with better direction; it struck the stag on the neck, in a

slanting direction, but the wound seemed very slight, for the arrow was shaken off by the next bound.

Another deer was wounded by a shot from one of the hunters on the opposite side of the opening; it fell, rose again, sprung forward, and, with the remaining four, was soon out of gunshot. Not so the stag which had apparently been slightly wounded by the chief's arrow; after making two or three vigorous bounds, it seemed paralysed, stood still, quivered, fell, and rolled over.

Vernon ran forwards to examine it; the stag was quite dead; yet the only apparent wound was a scratch on the side of the neck.

"The Worrali poison," said Carlos, who observed his astonishment. "I did not think our chief had any left; it is scarce, and very valuable; for the slightest touch, the merest prick of the point of an arrow which has been anointed with it, produces almost instant death; and yet the flesh remains uninjured as food."

The other wounded deer, which had tried in vain to keep pace with its companions, had also fallen; and soon after the four Indians from

the wood re-appeared, carrying between them a third, which had been shot dead at their first fire.

The game was carried to the canoes, and the party re-embarked.

On their way back, Vernon asked many questions as to this extraordinary poison. Carlos interpreted his questions to the chief, who seemed gratified at the white man's surprise. He smiled, and took up a long hollow tube, which was lying in the bottom of the canoe, selected a very small reed arrow from a bundle of others, and inserted it into the hollow of the tube. A large bird, of the heron tribe, was perched on the branch of a tree at a distance in front; motioning to the Indians to cease paddling, and let the canoe drift down the stream, he, when about a hundred yards from the bird, put the tube (called in the Indian language a blow-pipe) to his mouth, and, without apparent effort, sent the arrow to its mark.

The bird was hit in the back; it expanded its broad wings, and flew upwards for a second or two, then spun round, and dropped dead

on the water. When picked up, the small rush-like arrow was sticking in its back, but the wound was not deep, or near a vital part; the poison had again done its work.

"The Worrali poison was not made by his tribe" (so Carlos interpreted the chief's account of it), "but brought from far off in the south-east. It was a great mystery—very few tribes knew how to make it, and they would not divulge the secret; all sorts of incantations were used to give it its virtue, and a large price demanded; a gun, many charges of powder and shot, or a young girl accomplished in the arts of cooking, basket weaving, or hammock netting, used to be held a cheap exchange for a small quantity: now the use of fire-arms has diminished its utility; but it is still costly."

Sanchez inquired whether any of the tribe had ever travelled as far as Portuguese Guiana, where the Worrali poison was made, and was told that there remained only one old man who had ever been so far, and he was now blind from age; he hung his hammock in his grandson's hut, and would tell the white men all

about his travels. Poor old Comini liked to get any one to listen to him.

That evening, after they had done ample justice to Xaltalma's pepper-pot, Vernon and Sanchez wandered up the banks of the creek to take counsel together as to their future plans.

"We must waste no more time here," said Sanchez. "Deer-shooting, spearing mamre fish, and eating pepper-pot, are all very pleasant; and I dare say that you and I could each of us, if we chose it, woo or purchase one of the unadorned damsels who filled our pipes last night, to cook our meals, net our hammocks, build a yet more splendid hut than old Xaltalma's, and break her heart with envy by furnishing it with four stools, and, perhaps, introduce the unknown luxury of a table to increase the wants of our Indian friends. But we have other duties. We must get back to civilisation. I groan to rejoin my regiment; you sigh to see your sugar canes again, and, perhaps, for the smile of some fair Jamaica lady; nay, you need not look confused, I do not ask your confidence, but I do intreat you to join me in a speedy effort to return to our world.

To me, even the constant dangers and fatigues which we endured together while we were misleading the scent of those republican bloodhounds was more tolerable than the dreadful quiet of this wilderness."

"I quite agree with you, Sanchez; the sooner we can make our way to the coast the better. Would it not be well to talk to the blind old man, Comini? If we can reach the Dutch settlements on the coast which are now in the hands of the English Government, our difficulties will be over. I have no doubt that I should find friends there."

"I wish we had a map: I have but an indistinct recollection of the geography of the country, and the utmost notion of distance that we can gain from the narratives of the Indians will be so many days' journey. To-morrow, we will talk to old Comini, and we must have Carlos with us. I have already softened old Xaltalma's heart by a present of more gold than the old crone ever possessed before, and she consents to let him go. He will do anything I require from him. We must take him into our

council, I think; but we will settle all to-morrow."

Alas for to-morrow! how often has it deceived us—treacherous, uncertain to-morrow! So it was in this case, for the next day Vernon was ill with intermittent fever, and lying in his hammock, nursed with affectionate care by Sanchez, and the now really sincere and zealous Carlos, but refusing, it is true, to trust to Xaltalma's skill, or venture on either of her specifics, calomel or laudanum. Here we must leave him, and change the scene to Jamaica and to England.

CHAPTER VIII.

We left Julia Leslie in silent grief, lying on the sofa, in Vernon's lodgings, in Kingston, on the morning on which he had torn himself away. He believed that he left her unconscious; but it was not so.

She heard his retiring steps, and the welcome with which Captain O'Halloran greeted his friend. Her ears drank in the sound of Vernon's voice as he replied. She felt sure that it was the last time that its low tones would either pain or cheer her. Alas, how often had they grieved her of late!

Then she heard the sound of his step as he got into the carriage; and each footfall of the horses, as they lessened in the distance, wrung her heart. This died away; and now she was parted, as she believed, for ever from the only being in the world whom she really loved. A burst of tears and hysterical sobs alarmed Clara, as she supported her mistress to her

bed, sick in mind and body, and ill prepared for the anxieties which awaited her: and they followed in rapid succession.

The gale of wind which scattered the convoy disturbed her sleep: shipwrecks and drowning men haunted her dreams. Next came vague rumours, which no one could trace, of an action at sea. Some said that the Flora had been captured after a hard fight; others that she had been sunk; all was disheartening and uncertain.

Then the Flora was retaken by an English cruiser, and brought into Port Royal harbour. And the more accurate intelligence was dreadful: that Vernon was severely wounded, and a prisoner, was certain; but no one could tell more. Days of suspense became weeks, and still no further information was obtained.

Every morning Julia counted the minutes till the hour when Mr. Otway could be seen, and then either went or sent Clara to inquire if any tidings had arrived, waiting with feverish anxiety, when too ill to go herself, for the return of her messenger, only to suffer the misery of expiring hope. The answer was

always the same: nothing had been heard. And then she began to count the hours, in the hope that the next day must bring news; and the next day again deluded her.

The supposition that the schooner to which Vernon had been removed had foundered at sea was at first vaguely suggested, and then the belief seemed to be slowly but surely confirmed, as weeks passed on without any letters or intelligence.

There was another and a nobler heart which sympathised, though with far less intenseness, in poor Julia's anxiety.

Emily Vivian's sleep had also been disturbed by the gale which arose on the fourth night after Vernon sailed from Jamaica. The noise of the wind, moaning in the distance, or rushing and howling through the jalousied gallery which fronted her bed-room, brought back to her the night of the hurricane; and with it were associated feelings which she had hoped that she had conquered. Was *he* exposed to the storm which now shook the bed that she was lying on? And she rose and looked forth on the night.

The darkness was broken by an occasional gleam of distant lightning, and the wind came in fierce gusts roaring round the house. It was an awful night. She tried to fasten the rattling jalousies of her window still closer, and then knelt down by her bedside, and offered up a fervent prayer to the Being who "maketh the storm to cease, so that the waves thereof are still," for all her fellow-creatures encountering that fearful storm on the sea; and her strong mind then mastered its weaker feelings, and she again sank to sleep.

The rumour of the action and capture of the Flora by the American privateer had never reached her. It therefore required all her firmness and self-possession to conceal her emotion when General Vivian, on returning from a visit of inspection, brought back with him to dinner the young captain of the sloop of war which had recaptured the Flora. He sat next to her at dinner, and talked of nothing but the gallant fight which the Flora was said to have made against a superior force.

"There was a passenger, an officer of your

branch of the service, General," said he, "whom the crew spoke of very highly. He was dangerously wounded, they told me. I cannot now recollect his name; but I should know it if I heard it."

"What was the name, my dear Emily, of the vessel in which Mr. Vernon sailed for Canada? I, too, always forget names; but it could not be the same, I trust, for that ship had convoy."

Emily did not dare to trust her voice, the sudden and unexpected announcement had so grieved and startled her. She drew a long breath, and the colour left her cheek; but the struggle was so momentary, that her hesitation only appeared to be a pause for recollection, when she replied, in a low, steady voice,

"The Flora was the name of Mr. Vernon's ship."

"And Vernon was the young officer's name," said the naval captain. "I am grieved, since he is a friend of yours, to have brought you such unpleasant news."

"Where was poor Mr. Vernon wounded, Captain Wetherell?" asked Mrs. Vivian. "Is

his wound dangerous? is it likely to be fatal? and where is he? Have the Americans put him in prison? When is he likely to get out again?"

"I wish I could relieve your anxiety, Mrs. Vivian; but all that I know is what I hear from the prisoners and the English sailors whom we found on board the Flora when we came up with and recaptured her. They are now on board my ship. They cannot tell the exact nature of Mr. Vernon's wound, but they fear that it may be dangerous. The most extraordinary circumstance is the contradictory accounts which these men give of the fate of the master of the Flora, the rest of the crew, and this passenger, who were all wounded. Some say that they were put on board a Dutch schooner, bound for the island of St. Thomas; others think that only part of them were disposed of in this manner, and that the rest were kept in the privateer; and one Yankee is confident that they were all landed on the uninhabited island of Blanco. I don't believe a word of the last story. Perhaps he hopes that I shall send him there to look for them. Then it is

strange that no such Dutch schooner has been heard of at St. Thomas's; nor do we know what has become of the privateer. I should not be surprised if she were snapped up by one of our cruisers before she gets back to America. One of the prisoners tells me that they were very near being caught off St. Domingo, but escaped by taking in all sail; a wrinkle which I won't forget in my next cruise."

Although Mrs. Vivian could detect in her daughter's countenance nothing beyond the emotion natural on hearing the misfortunes of an intimate acquaintance, yet Emily herself was startled and disappointed when she had time to probe the recesses of her own heart.

She could not disguise from herself the gratification with which she had heard the praises bestowed on Vernon's conduct in the fight; and the grief with which she had listened to the account of his sufferings and danger, was more intense than common friendship could have excited.

Her mind revolted from the self-confession that some remnants of the affection which she thought that she had torn up and cast from

her as an unworthy thing, still had root in her woman's heart.

But so it was, and she found herself calling very often to see her friend Margaret Otway, led there, as she apologised to herself, by the hope of being able to learn some tidings for Harriet Vernon.

On one of these visits she was told that the ladies were out, but soon to return; the packet for England was to sail the next day, and as she had left a half-finished letter to Harriet Vernon on her writing desk, she resolved to wait for them, in the faint hope that she might be able to add some better news.

She sat down in the empty drawing-room, and was engaged in turning over the sketches in Margaret Otway's album, when her attention was diverted by the sound of a plaintive voice in the verandah: she looked up, and saw a young woman requesting to speak to Mr. Otway.

A servant answered that his master was soon expected home, and that she might wait his arrival; and he then left the stranger leaning for support against the jalousied partition, be-

tween the verandah and the drawing-room, and sobbing bitterly.

She was well dressed, her tall figure wrapped in a shawl which could not conceal that she would soon be a mother; her face retained traces of great beauty, but was emaciated, making her soft eyes seem preternaturally large; she trembled excessively, and might have fallen, but for the support against which she leaned.

Emily rose and called for a servant, intending to desire him to offer a chair to the sick visitor; but Sambo had disappeared, and there was no bell. She then went out herself, and invited the poor girl to come in, and rest herself until Mr. Otway came in.

"Let me support you," she said, for the stranger's agitation seemed to increase at her presence; she tottered, and seemed falling. "Lean on me, I will help you to the sofa, for you look very ill."

But the object of her kindness shrunk from the gentle arm, as if it would have enveloped her in the folds of a serpent.

"No: not this from *you!*" she exclaimed,

shuddering, as she extricated herself and sunk on the floor.

Emily gazed for an instant at the unhappy creature. The truth then flashed on her: it must be the writer of Vulcan's letter; she whom he had called his master's wife; who now, broken-hearted and fainting, lay on the floor at her feet.

Under other circumstances she might, perhaps, have recoiled from further contact; now she felt only compassion; she placed a pillow, from the sofa, under Julia's head, then filled a glass from the water-jar standing in the window, and sprinkled it on her face, and, as she revived, held the water to her lips.

"Drink, and you will be better," she said. "Now, let me raise you up;" and disregarding her faint resistance, supported her to the sofa, loosened the strings which impeded her breathing, and spoke to her in a soft voice, which pierced Julia's heart like a sword.

Julia felt the superiority of the being who bent over her; the mind which shone through Emily Vivian's countenance awed her weaker spirit; she felt that she was known, yet not

despised or hated; and this made her rival appear to her something more than human.

"You are better now?" asked Emily.

"Thank you, yes; now leave me, dear lady; you are too good to wait on poor me. I came to ask if *he* had been heard of; but, oh! I shall never see him more; and now that I have seen you, I know that it would be of no use. If my child survives me, be kind to it."

"Indeed, you are mistaken. Mr. Vernon is nothing to me but an old family friend."

"You say so, therefore you believe so; I know better. If you had heard him talk about you in his ravings, as I did when I watched by his bed in the fever, you would not doubt his love. If I hoped to live, I could not tell you this; but I feel that my days will be few. God bless you! may you be happier than poor Julia."

She rosé, took Miss Vivian's hand, kissed it, and suffered herself to be assisted to the kittereen, which was waiting for her.

"You will pity me, and let me know," she said to Miss Vivian, who had accompanied her

to the carriage, "if you hear anything of *him;* your servant Phœbe will know where to find me."

Emily felt too much agitated to encounter the Otways, and she hastened home, filled with compassion for a creature so young, so beautiful, so gentle and inexperienced; a fair vessel wrecked on the quicksands of a vicious society.

Vernon she could not excuse. He had not erred through want of knowledge of good and evil. He had disregarded the light which he possessed. He had sown poison, and it was flourishing. But she could pity him: she knew that he must be enduring remorse, a suffering which her own happy inexperience of it rendered perhaps more terrible to her imagination.

Further tidings of Vernon soon arrived in the form of the first set of bills drawn by him at Barcelona; it was clear that, at the date of these bills, he was living. This news was sent by M'Kenzie to General Vivian, and by Emily to Julia. The news came opportunely; Julia's spirits were soothed at a critical moment,

for the day afterwards she gave birth to a daughter.

But, worn down by months of anxiety and ill health, her recovery was slow; her mother was with her, but she had always been harsh; there never, indeed, was much sympathy or confidence between them; the tie was that of mere instinct.

Her own infant, a beautifully fair child, reminded her only of its absent father. She grew more and more nervous and weak, and her life seemed to hang on a thread.

Hope was gone; all that she valued or cared for had vanished, like a dream. Religion was to her a mere form; she never had been taught to trust to its support.

Day followed day, without change or comfort, when one morning she was lying on the sofa where Vernon parted from her; her memory was recalling his last words and looks as she pressed his child to her heart. Clara sat on a stool at her feet.

Suddenly the door opened, and Pompey entered the room, which was partially darkened

to keep out the sun, so that he could not at first distinguish its inmates.

Clara started up, and asked him if his master was with him.

"No, Clara," he replied, recognising the voice; "you neber see good Massa Vernon any more. Him dead! me see him go out for fight, and him killed; him neber come back!"

A faint groan from the sofa did not reach his dull ear; but Clara shrieked out.

"Oh, Pompey, you kill poor missis!" as she raised Julia's head from the pillow on which it had fallen back; but it was all over! The loving, gentle spirit had departed.

Pompey had returned with Captain Robins and the rest of the Flora's crew, which brought down the news a little later. When Vernon went out with the garrison of Barcelona, he assured Captain Robins that, if he lived, he should not be many days absent, for he intended merely to assist in disputing the passage of the Boca pass. If the invasion succeeded, of course he must retreat with his own friends; if it were repelled, he intended to leave them

to pursue their success. So far, and no further, he thought his interference justified. After the news of the success of the patriot troops had reached Barcelona, Captain Robins daily looked for his return; but time passed on, and he heard all sorts of reports as to the fate of his former passenger; that he had been killed in action, or that he had been taken prisoner and shot; then another report was current that he had deserted to the other side, and that a reward was offered for his apprehension.

"I waited, and waited," he said to his employer, Mr. Otway, "and could hear nothing more; and my own belief is, that the poor young gentleman has come to some untimely end; killed, most likely, fighting where he had no call to do so. I saw how ready he was at that work, when he fought beside me in my brig. So I chartered the droger which brought us here; and I brought that cowardly black servant, Pompey, back with me. If poor Mr. Vernon is dead, some one, I suppose, will pay me for his passage."

The report of Vernon's probable death be-

came general, and as months passed away without any further tidings, people began to inquire if there was a will, or who was the heir-at-law.

Emily Vivian had felt so much compassion for the victim of Vernon's transient attachment, that she listened with interest to Phœbe's tales of her ill health and grief. In this way she had heard of Julia's giving birth to a daughter, and she hoped that its presence might soothe the mother. Soon after she heard the details of her death. They did not increase Vernon's misconduct, but they made it more shocking. The way in which the poor girl's love survived alienation and absence, and at last cut short her life, associated with Vernon ideas, which would have made him almost hateful to her if she had believed him to be living.

Absence does much to soften down the disagreeable recollections of our friends, and death still more. The mind delights to dwell on all that was good or noble, but shrinks from the darker features. It is a needless maxim, that "nothing evil should be said of the dead," for

it is almost an instinct to think nothing but good of those whom we have once loved, and who are removed from us for ever.

Thus Emily Vivian's recollections dwelt with a melancholy pleasure on the bright points of Vernon's character. His talents, his kind-heartedness, the happiness which he created and spread over his estates, his high courage and gentle manners, and the happy days which she had spent at Mount Edwards, were embalmed with the memory of the dead; his faults and his wrong-doings forgiven, if not forgotten. Some of her letters to her friend, Miss Vernon, betray this softened feeling.

"North Street, Kingston, Jamaica,
October 15. 1814.

"My dearest Harriet,

"It grieves me to be again unable to give you any certain intelligence as to the fate of your brother. Alas! all that has been heard since my last letter is so afflicting, so very disheartening, that I have put off writing to you until the last day. Still my promise, not to allow a packet to sail without a letter, shall be fulfilled.

"I must repeat that nothing decided has been heard; but Captain Robins, the master of the ship in which he was taken prisoner after that dreadful battle, is now in Jamaica. My father has seen him. The story he tells is, that your brother, after behaving most gallantly in the action, was wounded, but not so severely as was at first reported; that after having been some time a prisoner, he was landed, with this captain and the other wounded men, at Barcelona, in South America; that he recovered from his wound, and then volunteered, with the disregard of danger or of any selfish feeling, which ennobled his character, to assist in the defence of the town against some dreadful banditti who threatened to burn it down.

"He was last seen riding out with the governor of Barcelona and some armed townspeople to repel the invaders; but neither he nor the governor returned while Captain Robins remained in the place, though he staid there a fortnight afterwards. And he says that a battle was fought, and the invaders driven back; and — for I cannot any longer

put off the pain of telling you — there was a report that your brother was taken prisoner. But that is all that Captain Robins can tell. God grant you fortitude to bear all this, my dearest Harriett, and to submit to His will, if our worst apprehensions prove too true. I know what you must endure. I never had a brother, but I can readily conceive how you must have loved him, so brave, so kind-hearted, and so generous; and with such bright prospects.

"But I am allowing myself to dwell too long on these feelings, for there is still hope. Those of a more sanguine disposition than mine think that there is great hope. God grant that it may be so!

"My dear mother's health is far from re-established. I am very uneasy about her, and my father talks sometimes of sending us both home. It would be painful to leave him here alone, detained by his military duty; otherwise I should rejoice in the prospect. I am weary of this hateful place, where the soul is chilled while the body is fevered. I feel more and more the want of society — English society

and dear friends; and of you, dear Harriet, amongst the dearest.

"Ever yours,

"EMILY VIVIAN."

"Jamaica, July 14. 1815.

"My dearest Harriet,

"The Greyhound man-of-war sailing for England, I cannot resist writing to you.

"Alas! we have heard no further tidings of your brother. May God grant you strength, and support you to bear up against this dreadful trial. I now enclose, as you ask for it, a copy of the sketch which I made of Mount Edwards and its dear garden. I must keep the original—how many happy days I spent there! Now the hurricane has destroyed the beautiful bowers and pleasant house; would that this was the only misfortune which that drawing recalls! and that he, who made his mountain-home so delightful to his friends, and who was so deservedly beloved by his poor negroes, was not also lost to them; but why add to your distress by my vain sympathy?

"My dear mother is really very ill, and

Doctor M'Nalty has almost persuaded her to go home. Nothing else, I feel convinced, will be of any service to her; and it is almost arranged that we return in the next packet. What a delightful word that *home* is! but to feel its full force, it is necessary to have been long abroad; not on the other side of the Channel, in France or Italy only, but across the Atlantic. I have not time to add more, than that I remain ever your affectionate

"EMILY VIVIAN.

"P.S. I open my letter to tell you that there is a fresh report, which I can trace to no one, that your brother had assisted a Spanish officer, who was a prisoner, and an old friend of his, to escape, and that neither had since been heard of. It seems thus far like truth, that it is just the conduct which all his friends would expect from Mr. Vernon.

"Again adieu, E. V."

We will now add some other letters in explanation of our story: —

Brock Street, Bath,
Jan. 3. 1815.

"My dearest Father,

"I rejoice to tell you that we arrived safely at Falmouth, after a voyage of only thirty-one days; and that mama is a great deal better — nearly herself again. We both felt the cold very severely, after leaving the Bahamas; then came a storm and sea-sickness, and all the miseries of shipboard. The next land seen was the Azores; a fine day tempted me on deck, and I made a sketch of Corvo, as we passed close to its frowning cliffs and high volcanic mountain. We saw St. Michael's, where the oranges grow, in the distance; then we had bad weather again, but were comforted, as we lay shivering in our berths, by hearing that the Lizard lights were in sight, and next day we landed at Falmouth. I could hardly refrain from kissing the stones on the pier; dear, dear old England! We came here at once, as fast as bad roads and post-horses could take us; the very rattle of an old yellow post-chaise was delightful. We have an excellent well-furnished house here. Dr. P. says mama

must go through a course of medicine, and then drink the waters. I think that she would be better without either; but of course the man of draughts and pills has his own way.

"Old Mrs. Edwards is as full of her ailments and misfortunes as ever (and she has to suffer a real one now); and her niece, my dear school-fellow and old friend, Harriet, is in very low spirits. The shock of hearing of her brother's death would not be so intolerable as the suspense which she now endures; for she still cherishes hopes that poor Charles Vernon lives, and will yet be heard of. I cannot bring myself to undeceive her, and tell her how you, and all his friends in Jamaica, had given up all hopes; and I, too, sometimes cannot help sharing her deception, when she talks to me about him. What a dreadful blow his loss will be to her; not only because they loved each other as brother and sister seldom do, but also because, as I am told, he has not gone through some forms which are necessary, to prevent his property from going to a cousin; and in that case I fear that she and her aunt will be slenderly provided for. Mama pained

me so by suggesting that she should become a governess.

"The principal part of their income was derived from Mr. Vernon's liberality. Generous Charles Vernon! his loss will be felt here as well as in Jamaica.

"Bath is very full, and we meet a number of our old friends and acquaintance. Mama goes out more than I could wish her to do in her weak state. Last night she would go to a ball at the upper rooms; there we saw our old acquaintance, Captain Myers, his importance not diminished by his becoming the probable heir, by the death of his cousin, to an entailed estate in Yorkshire, and to a baronetcy; all which facts he entertained me with, while I danced with him.

"We met, too, the Bradshaws and the Cartwrights, and a host of old acquaintances. I persuaded mama to come home very early; these public balls which I once thought so pleasant, now seem very tiresome. This evening will be spent more agreeably, as Mrs. Edwards and Harriet Vernon dine with us. I take Harriet out walking with me, whenever

mama can spare me, and we take long rambles together in the country; the only thing that does not seem changed since our school-girl days. Give my love to Margaret Otway, when you next meet her. How is my dear pet, Busaco? Pray recollect your promise, that, as he was Mr. Vernon's present, he shall never be sold. Whenever you come home, and may that day soon arrive, my dear father, you must give him to Miss Otway, who promised to use him kindly. I hear Harriet Vernon's knock at the door, and I must get ready for our walk. Adieu, my dear father. Pray write by every packet.

"Your affectionate daughter,

"EMILY VIVIAN."

Letter from Mrs. Vivian to General Vivian.

"Brock Street, Bath,
Jan. 5. 1815.

"My dear General,

"Emily has, I know, written to you, and told you of our safe arrival here. My health is far from re-established; I am yet paying the

penalty of the sacrifice I made in going to Jamaica. Dr. P. tells me that my liver is slightly affected; so I am obliged to undergo a horrid course of medicine. He insists on my taking regular carriage exercise. I had intended to try to do without one; but of course it is now a necessary; so I was obliged to put up with the best I could procure here. And I so wanted you to choose the horses: the dealers always cheat women. My new coachman does not like them; he says their legs are unsound. I am no judge of this; but I am sure that they look sleek and pretty in their new harness. Emily enjoys her usual good health; she looked remarkably well at the rooms last night, where I allowed myself to be persuaded to take her. It is natural that young people should like these things; and I am not so selfish as to wish to debar her from society, because I am too languid to enjoy it myself. We met a great many old friends: amongst them that handsome young man, Captain Myers; he was, you may recollect, an old admirer of Emily's. I discouraged his advances then, for obvious reasons; now he has become heir to a baronetcy,

and a fine estate in Yorkshire. Emily danced with him, and then he sat with me and paid me all sorts of compliments on her appearance; quite distinguée, he said; he did not know which to admire most, her dress or her beauty. I am afraid that she did not encourage him much. He would now be a far better match than poor Mr. Vernon. By the by, I find that his death will quite ruin Mrs. Edwards and her niece; they were nearly wholly dependent on him. The estates were entailed to the exclusion of his sister, and he has done nothing to cut off the entail. He ought not to have accustomed them to all sorts of foolish luxuries, quite unsuited to their income, if he meant to leave them in poverty. I ask them sometimes to dine with us, poor things; and I did talk of recommending Miss Harriet as governess to Lady Diana Moneymore; but I wish you could have seen how angry Emily became. The two girls take long walks together, and I dare say fill each other's heads with romance and nonsense. How is your gout? I hope you keep your promise to me, and never indulge in a se-

cond bottle of claret. Now I am away, you will, I fear, relapse into cigars.

" Your affectionate,

" MARY VIVIAN.

" P.S. I shall be forced to draw from Y. and Co. for more than I expected. I find money goes fearfully fast here; and yet I try to be as economical as I can. I have put the footmen on an allowance of small beer, and restricted the women servants (all but my own maid) to brown sugar in their tea."

The same to the same.

" Brock Street,
Jan. 10. 1816.

" My dear General,

" I received your letter, and am rejoiced to hear that your gout keeps off. My health does not mend; and as I have, in addition, to contend with worry and vexation, I cannot expect to improve. There is now no doubt that Captain Myers would propose to Emily if she would let him; he follows her about every where; but,

instead of encouraging him, as she knows I wish her to do, she will not in the least alter her manner; and is just as cool, and laughs at his harmless self-conceit just as much as she used to do when he was nobody. Her obstinate spirit will not stoop to flatter or sympathise with what she calls his self-important trifling; and so she may throw away the best match that she is ever likely to meet with: it is too provoking. I wish you were here to manage her folly; my spirits are too weak. And then there is that meddling friend of hers, Miss Vernon, who might be better engaged in earning her livelihood; but she, I have no doubt, encourages Emily in her opposition and disobedience. She will persist in believing that her brother Charles is still alive, and will some day come back; and all this nonsense may have something to do with Emily's undutiful conduct; for I do really believe she would rather marry Mr. Vernon than become Lady Myers, with twice his fortune. I always told you that you indulged the girl's caprices too much, and now you see the consequence. It is fortunate for me that I am naturally so patient.

Pray take care of your gout. Dr. P. tells me that claret is the very worst thing for it, except perhaps champagne; so you should only drink a little Madeira, which would be more economical too. I am afraid to look at my weekly bills; and Madame Le Blanc's bill, for millinery, makes me quite nervous when I think of it; for every thing that we brought from Jamaica, looked outré here, and I forced Emily to reform her dress. With her natural advantages, it is provoking to see how little she thinks about it; I know that Captain Myers professes to be a connoisseur in these matters. I hope the report of a brevet may prove true, as it would bring you home.

"Ever your affectionate,

"MARY VIVIAN."

We must add one more letter.

Emily Vivian to Harriet Vernon.

"Brock Street, Jan. 15.

"My dearest Harriet,

"I am disappointed that we cannot accomplish our proposed walk to Charlcomb to-day.

Mama insists on my going with her to Madame Le Blanc's, and so I shall be compelled to waste the morning in listening to that tiresome woman's dissertations on velvets and satins; and submit to have all sorts of fine things tried on, which I don't want, instead of rambling with you about the glen, and looking for early violets and primroses, on the 'brae side,' over the beautiful little church.

"I wanted, too, to tell you about our party last night at the Bradshaw's. I was sorry that you would not join us; there was the usual set; and we had music and quadrilles for the young, and cards for the old people. I was obliged to dance with Captain Myers; and then he stood a fixture behind me at the piano, and annoyed me by his compliments. I tried in vain to shake him off. I used to think this easy with a vain person, who is generally sensitive, but I failed; for what I said, almost bitterly, was always received 'au pied de la lettre,' and as a compliment. For instance: when I told the Adonis that it disturbed my conscience to monopolise his attention, he explained very gravely, that, as a rule, I was quite

right — that it is unfair, in general; but that mine is an exception — a special case. Oh, dear! Heaven protect me from his insane specialties! Adieu till to-morrow.

"Ever yours,

"EMILY VIVIAN."

CHAPTER IX.

THE wished-for to-morrow was one of the real spring mornings which sometimes interrupt the east winds of March.

A gentle south-west breeze scarcely stirred the pale green leaves of the willows, and curled the blue smoke from the cottages, as the two friends, leaving behind and below them the steaming cauldron of King Bladud, reached the narrow lane leading to the valley of Charlcomb.

Primroses and violets peeped out from the southern bank; the hawthorn buds seemed to expand as you looked at them; lambs were bleating and chasing each other in the meadows, and the skylark was hovering between heaven and earth.

Both the girls were silent, for their hearts were full; each of them, young as they were, had tasted the first bitterness of human life, and they walked on, silent if not sad.

"See, there is the dear little church," said Harriet, "and the pretty parsonage-house. How the bank contrasts with the rich brown of the oak-buds in the copse above it; and here are wood anemones; how early they bloom under the shelter of these trees, but the next frost will wither them. Do they not look feminine, and resemble our poor selves?"

"Yes, dear Harriet, and I almost fear that, with us, the frost has begun. This morning mama had a letter which made her very uneasy, and has alarmed me yet more. It was from one of our city friends. He says that there is a rumour that the banking-house of Y. and Co. is in difficulties. All mama's fortune is in their hands. She tries not to believe it. Till we left Jamaica, she never guided our establishment; she merely superintended the details. And I fear that, since she has been left to herself, her want of experience, and her wish to keep me in a high position, have led her to arrange our expenses on a scale larger than was strictly prudent, and my dear father has always been too liberal. If Y. and Co. fail, we shall be in debt. I did

not mean to tell you all this, but your observation put me off my guard. Oh, this weary world, made up of vanities and disappointments!"

Harriet's eyes filled with tears. "Are we, then, so soon to resemble each other in our fortunes?" she said, as she threw her arm round her friend. "I, too, have my grief, which I would have concealed until our walk was over. I have written to Lady Diana Moneymore to accept her offer, and I know not how soon I may have to commence my new duties. My dear aunt reluctantly gave her consent. You know our failing means; the salary which I am promised will help to support her."

"And nobly you have acted, my dear Harriet; would that I could do the same, if the calamity which now threatens us should overwhelm us. I am haunted by a horrible presentiment of a worse sacrifice; but this is all useless. Come, let us look for violets while this sunshine lasts, and leave the rest to Providence."

The danger to which Emily alluded was very serious.

General Vivian, when a handsome young soldier of fortune, won the only child of the head of a great banking-house. He was supposed to be extravagant, and when the old man's consent to his daughter's marriage was wrung from him, he not only settled the whole of his fortune to the separate use of his daughter, but, in the fear that if it were vested in trustees they might allow her husband to waste it, he directed that, during her life, it should remain in the house. The General's habits did not improve with age, and he was much in debt when he accepted the staff appointment in Jamaica. After the father-in-law's death, younger and less prudent partners succeeded to the management of the bank; they speculated, were unfortunate, and now were on the verge of bankruptcy. Poor Mrs. Vivian shut her eyes, like the hunted ostrich; would not believe the tidings, and refused to listen to her daughter's entreaties to prepare for the worst, by giving up their expensive establishment at Bath.

As the friends were going down Lansdown hill, on their return, they were overtaken by Captain Myers, as usual on horseback, for he was vain of his horses and of his seat. He now threw the reins to his groom.

"You will let me join you, will you not?" he said, offering his arm to Emily. "I called in Brock Street, and heard that you had undertaken a country walk. I rode as far as the top of Lansdown in the hope of overtaking you."

"We turned off towards Charlcomb," answered Emily, declining his arm.

"And so I missed you. What could take you into that ugly lane, with its high hedges and steep path?"

"We preferred it to the high road; besides, we were searching for violets; look, what a quantity we have found."

"Ah! only primroses and violets; but I am glad you like flowers. Some day I hope to offer you a bouquet worthy your acceptance. The conservatory at Oak Hall is not bad, but when it is mine, I intend to enlarge it. I am

fond of flowers too, but I like exotics. I shall allow no common flowers there, such as lilies and roses; don't you agree with me, Miss Vivian?"

"Not quite. I love roses; and I am not sure that I do not prefer a vulgar cabbage-rose to most exotics."

"Then the new conservatory shall be filled with your roses, since such is your taste; only *we* must give your favourite a more aristocratic name——"

"Which will not, perhaps, improve it. I hate changing old names," replied Emily, colouring, for she did not like the manner in which she had been associated with Captain Myers's improvements.

He observed her blush, but his vanity attributed it to a different cause; so he smiled complacently as he continued in a more marked manner,—

"I acknowledge my error; the blush-rose will henceforward be my favourite; it will remind me of to-day."

Emily felt more and more uncomfortable,

and yet there was no escape; no means of contradicting her admirer's assumptions without appearing to understand them. She looked confused, and was silent; and this confirmed the impression which she wished, but did not know how, to remove.

"Did you ride as far as the monument, Captain Myers?" asked Harriet, determined to break an embarrassing pause.

"Yes, I had a delightful canter on the turf. How I long to see Miss Vivian on horseback. Mrs. Vivian tells me that she rode constantly in Jamaica. I have a thorough bred mare which my groom is training to carry a side-saddle, so gentle and so beautiful."

Emily thought of Busaco and its donor, and sighed as she said—

"I don't think that I shall ever ride again, certainly not with the pleasure that I used to feel."

"Oh yes, you will, Miss Vivian," replied Captain Myers. "You know that Mrs. Vivian half promised me that when my mare's education is perfected, and she can be trusted with such a burden, she will permit you to ride her.

The country would be unendurable without horses. I mean to build capital stables at Oak Hall."

And in this way Captain Myers continued to talk, always applying every thing to the anticipated enjoyments and improvements at Oak Hall, and as constantly referring to Emily Vivian for her approval; but still not in so direct a way as to authorise her to disclaim the interest which he really believed that she felt when he talked about pulling down the old Hall and building a modern house on its site. He did not leave them till they reached Brock Street.

"Really," said Harriet Vernon, "if our walk had lasted longer, I fear that you would have been consulted as to the colour of the drawing-room curtains in the house that is to be at Oak Hall. It is a pity that Captain Myers has not higher, or rather different talents; he is very handsome, and seems good-natured, but his mind is so full of dress and equipage and show as to have little room left for anything else, except, perhaps, admiration of you."

"Yes, Harriet, Captain Myers is, as you say, good-looking, and good tempered. More than all these, he will be rich; and he admires me too, but I cannot return it. I can never love this man, so that his merits, such as they are, only add to my embarrassments — my mother importunes me already. How I long for my father's arrival. He always said that though he might object to my choice, he would never choose for me. But then if we are to lose our fortune his views may alter."

"I did not know that you expected him soon."

"Did I not tell you? My mind has been so distracted that I forgot that you did not know that mama has had another letter from Mr. F. of the War Office, telling her that there is to be a reduction of the colonial staff, and that my father's recall has gone out. So I trust that we may expect him very soon. Here comes mama, I know her knock; I am glad that she had spirits to go to the pump-room while I was out."

"And now I will bid you good-bye, Emily; I must return to my poor aunt, and go on with

my sad preparations. Oh dear! I wonder whether Lady Diana Moneymore is at all like my ideal picture of her. The poor governess's heart begins to fail her."

"Yet I almost envy you, Harriet: we all think our own sorrows the hardest."

Miss Vernon passed Mrs. Vivian on the staircase, receiving a sort of salutation which reminded her of her new position.

Mrs. Vivian found Emily in the drawing-room.

"You look better, mama. Have you heard any good news, anything from Messrs. Y. and Co.?"

"Oh no, I am not now thinking about that; I never do think of it when I can help it; but I met Captain Myers in Milson Street (for one of the tiresome carriage horses is lame, and I was obliged to walk), and he turned and walked home with me. He said that he was delighted with you, my dear; that he had joined you in your walk, and that you and he had such confidential talk about the improvements that you are one day to make at Oak Hall. He wanted my opinion too as to the house, and—and—but

I am too happy to repeat it all now. I am sure but for Miss Vernon, who must have been sadly *de trop* in your party, he would have made you a formal proposal; but, perhaps, it is as well as it is. We must have your father home before we can arrange about settlements, and all that. Oh dear, I am so tired!" And Mrs. Vivian sank back, exhausted by her volubility.

Emily looked aghast, and assured her mother that she was quite mistaken, that nothing of the kind had passed; that when Captain Myers joined her he did certainly talk of greenhouses and exotics, and rebuilding Oak Hall, and also about the horse which he was training for a side-saddle, but that was all; nothing that he had said could be misinterpreted as meaning more.

"I know better, child, and I am not pleased with you for affecting all this maidenly simplicity with me; it would be all proper to Captain Myers, but not to your mother: I made no secret to him how much I was pleased. How I do wish your father would return. Captain Myers told me that he was most anxi-

ous to see him. I knew what he meant: he is evidently waiting for the General's return to propose. Ring the bell for me: I had almost forgotten to take my afternoon draught, and Dr. P. is so particular about it."

"Shall I bring it to you?" said Emily, glad to escape.

"Yes, do my dear: I have promised to try and go to the concert, at the upper rooms to-night. Captain Myers told me that it would be an excellent one."

Emily pleaded a headache—a heart ache would have been nearer the truth, but it was in vain.

At the concert Captain Myers attached himself exclusively to Mrs. Vivian's party; talked significantly of his anxiety for the return of his old friend the General; and while he never risked saying anything which could be put down by contradiction or refusal, his demeanour convinced the world that there was an engagement.

Emily Vivian's manner indeed was as cold as she could make it without rudeness; but this he did not, or he would not perceive.

He was not a quick observer, partly from want of talent, and partly because he was always so engrossed with what he was saying or doing, that he had not time to watch the effect which he was producing; and besides, how was it possible that his attentions could be anything but gratifying. Was he not the handsome Captain Myers? heir to a baronetcy, and five thousand a year?

Mrs. Vivian was delighted, and she continued to force out Emily to some party or public amusement every evening; she was trying in the whirl of society to escape from reflection and apprehension, and wherever they went there also was Captain Myers; his conceit however somewhat chastened in Emily's presence, for his little mind quailed before hers, and he began to fear almost as much as he admired her.

She was soon to lose the consolation of a friend. Early one forenoon Harriet Vernon came to take leave: her place for Watercove, Lady Diana Moneymore's residence, was taken in that evening's Exeter mail. It was her last morning.

The schoolfellows' early attachment had been strengthened, not only by similarity of minds and disposition, but by a sympathy in Charles Vernon's fate; unacknowledged by Emily, even to herself.

Mrs. Vivian usually breakfasted in her own room; and the friends indulged their grief, as the hour of separation approached, unchecked by her presence.

They were startled by the sharp knock of the postman. Two letters were taken up to Mrs. Vivian; then her bell rang violently, and presently after, her maid, Benson, ran down, looking frightened, and said that her mistress had fainted.

Dreadful apprehension overwhelmed Emily; her father! — had he fallen a victim to the yellow fever; or was he lost at sea? She hurried to her mother's room, snatched up the letters, and was at once relieved from her terror; the minor misfortune which they communicated seemed as nothing at the moment.

One was from the principal partner of the bank of Y. and Co., stating that the commercial difficulties of the times had compelled

them to stop payment; and expressing much regret that Mrs. Vivian's last drafts (they amounted to some hundred pounds) had been unavoidably dishonoured. The other letter was from a London attorney, requesting Mrs. Vivian, on behalf of a Mr. Solomon, the holder of her protested drafts, to provide for their immediate payment.

"Thank God!" said Emily, as she threw down the letters.

"Are you mad, child?" said her mother, now sitting up, and looking wild with excitement. "Do you thank God that we are ruined — quite ruined? that not a shilling remains to meet all your father's debts? He will be arrested and sent to the King's Bench, as soon as he arrives; and I shall die, and you will be a beggar! Oh! I am so ill; do send for Dr. P."

Emily sent for Dr. P.; and then her friend Harriet left her alone. Young and inexperienced, she was now called upon to act as well as to suffer; for her mother's mind was quite unequal to the emergency, and resigned itself to her daughter's guidance.

The chariot and horses were sold; and the proceeds served to stay Mr. Solomon's demand. Coachman and groom were discharged; and for a few days there was a respite. But other claimants succeeded: the furniture of the house had not been paid for; and there were many tradesmen's bills. Her letters to Miss Vernon will best tell the difficulties she had to meet.

"Brock Street, April.

"Since you left us, my dearest Harriet, mama has continued in the same dejected state; mind and body seem paralysed, and, when roused, a paroxysm of grief succeeds. I do not understand the mere loss of money producing such overwhelming despair; but she tells me, when I try to comfort her, that we are worse than ruined — that my father was in debt when he went to Jamaica, and that his equipments for his staff-appointment are still unpaid for; then there are our expenses here.

"I am sure that I could relinquish luxuries and vanities, and live in a cottage without repining; but the sense of *debt* — that is humili-

ating, and it bows me down. I dread, too, to think how my father's proud spirit will writhe under it. I have satisfied the most clamorous of our tradesmen with what money mama had by her; and now the housekeeper tells me that she has none for our daily wants. I dare not speak to mama about a fresh supply; for the very word money brings on an hysterical fit; yet something must be done. God help and direct me! Write to me as you promised.

"Ever yours,

"EMILY VIVIAN."

"P. S.—Captain Myers sends to make daily inquiries for mama's health; but he does not call. She laments this: to me it is a great relief.

"E. V."

"My dearest Harriet,

"The crisis of our misfortunes came yesterday. Mama received a rude letter from the upholsterers, when our difficulties first became known. This I answered as civilly as I could, entreating them to wait until my father's

return: I humbled myself in vain. Yesterday, a sheriff's officer entered the house; the furniture was seized, and a public sale is threatened.

"In the midst of our alarm mama received a letter. She did not show it to me; but as I took it up to her room, I recognised the crest on the seal: it was from Captain Myers. She seemed relieved, and came down to the drawing-room, for the first time for several days. Soon after, the sheriff's officer left the house, and all our worst difficulties seem removed for the present; but I dread to think at what cost this may have been effected. Oh, that my father were returned!

"Ever yours,
"EMILY VIVIAN."

"Brock Street, April.

"My dearest Harriet,

"I had scarcely sent my last letter to the post, when I saw Captain Myers dismount from his horse at our door. I escaped to my room, and he saw mama alone — a long interval; and then I was told that mama

wished me to go to her in the drawing-room. I tried to summon all my courage; still I trembled as I went down stairs, and felt giddy and faint — I could hardly reach the sofa. Mama stood up and left the room; I could not stir, but I felt my face flush. Captain Myers, who had been standing while mama was in the room, now seated himself close to the sofa; and, as I anticipated, a formal proposal followed.

"He had, he said, obtained my mother's consent; and now his happiness was at my disposal.

"He did not allude to our present circumstances; his manner was deferential, humbler, and more natural than I ever saw it before. His delicacy made the obligations, which I cannot but suspect that we owe to him, seem the heavier.

"What could I say? I told him that I felt flattered by his preference; that he had my esteem and my gratitude, but that this was all; and that I never would marry, if I did not experience a stronger feeling.

"'Your mother, my dear Miss Vivian,' he

replied, 'has assured me that you have no prior attachment; and that you have honoured me by some degree of preference. But I am wrong to try to extort your secrets, until your father can confirm my happiness. Pray forgive my indiscretion; for which I must plead Mrs. Vivian's encouragement. Until General Vivian gives me his sanction, consider me only as your friend, and pray allow me to serve you.'

"And before I could give utterance to the stronger denial which rose to my lips, he had taken my hand, kissed it, and left the room. How will all this end? My mother insisted on knowing all; and she is indignant at what she calls my disobedient folly. I reproach myself for not having been more decided in my rejection. But if you knew the state of my mind, and all that I have to endure, you would not be surprised that I have lost the firmness of purpose for which you used to compliment me. When will my father return?

"Ever yours,

"EMILY VIVIAN."

Miss Vernon to Miss Vivian.

" Watercove, near Exeter.

" My dearest Emily,

" I need not tell you how grieved I am to hear of your mother's continued illness, or how I sympathise with you in all your trials, and admire the courage with which you are doing all that can be done to get honourably through them. I wish you could spare a little, for I sadly want it. I promised you a journal, and I will 'begin with the beginning.' The mail put me down safe at the Full Moon Inn, Exeter, the morning after I left you, and I had to find my way to Watercove, about ten miles off. A chaise, I thought would be too expensive; so, after a consultation with the good-humoured landlady, I was sent on in a machine, called a tax-cart, drawn by one horse, a sort of conveyance half gig and half cart, which took me and my trunks very comfortably. But I was wrong: had I known the world, I should have been more prudent in making my

first appearance. As it was, the gate-keeper at the park-lodge wanted to send me round by a lane to the back entrance. This I would not consent to, and so my humble conveyance drew up in front of the portico of a great mansion, all looking very new.

"No trees in the lawn, only young saplings, the gravel in the drive loose, just laid down, and the cut stone of the house looking fresh, from the Babbicomb quarry.

"Here again I found admittance difficult: the boy who drove me was reprimanded for coming to the front door; and when I gave my card to the footman, he scrutinised me as if he suspected me of wicked intentions, and then very uncivilly told me to sit down on a bench in the outer hall.

"Here I remained some time unnoticed: then another servant announced to me that her Ladyship was at luncheon, but would see me presently; and, in the meantime, desired that I might be shown to the school-room. To the school-room I followed him accordingly, mounting a grand staircase, and was ushered into a large half-furnished room, where broken dolls and cracked drums were scattered about.

"Here Lady Diana joined me. She is a tall, masculine-looking woman of about forty, and looks as if she had been very handsome in her youth; but she is now very large. I was prepared for much that might mortify my vanity and exercise my patience, but I did expect more Christian civility than her Ladyship condescended to bestow on me. She did not affect to conceal that my appearance did not please her: she almost told me in plain words, that I was too young, and too good-looking for my situation; disqualifications which will soon disappear, for the governess cannot expect to retain cheerfulness and health to give offence.

"My pupils were now introduced to me. Miranda, the eldest, a tall girl of fourteen, looks sickly and ill-tempered; Die, the next, is two years younger, pretty, pert, and mischievous. Ellen, the youngest girl, is a plain poor little thing of eight years old; and last, but not the least important personage, Master Montague, his mother's darling, is as spoiled and sturdy a little imp, of six years old, as ever deserved, but never knew correction.

"The eldest son, Lionel, is in the Guards,

and the second, Robert, at Rugby; neither now at home.

"The master of the house, Mr. Moneymore, I mention him last, for he seems the least important personage here, is an elderly, easy-tempered man, fond of good dinners, and farming, and seems in some awe of Lady Diana.

"I breakfast at eight with my pupils, pass the morning in the school-room, dine with them at two o'clock, and only appear in the drawing-room after dinner; and when there are guests, I am expected to take my seat at the piano, or, fill a vacant place in a round game of cards.

"Then every body is so civil to the poor governess; the effort is so marked, that I wince under it.

"The country round is beautiful. The fine shores of Babbicomb Bay are only half a mile from the house; and my long walks with my pupils are my chief enjoyment. Still no tidings of my brother's fate; and *still* I do not despair.

"Ever your affectionate friend,

"HARRIET VERNON."

The same to the same.

" Watercove.

" My dearest Emily,

" I am so miserable that I must go on telling you my afflictions, although I know you have to bear your own as well as to sympathise with mine.

" I certainly cannot remain in my present position. I never would have undertaken it had I known half its mortifications. I succeed in the school-room better than I expected to do, and if I could retire to it always, like a snail to its shell, my life would be tolerable.

" Since I last wrote to you, Captain Lionel Moneymore has arrived here, bringing with him his cousin, Captain O'Halloran, now on leave from his regiment in Jamaica.

" The young heir of the Moneymores is, as I think I told you, a dawdling Guardsman, and as a relief from the ennui of a country-house, has amused himself by persecuting me with more personal compliments than I ever had lavished on me before.

"You may fancy Lady Diana's indignation at witnessing the attempt of the heir to flirt with the governess; this has made my evening attendance in the drawing-room quite intolerable, and threatens to put a stop to my walks. I am the more provoked at this, because I really should like to talk more to Captain O'Halloran, who is as fond of walking as I am, and who was an old brother officer and intimate friend of my dear brother's, and continually with him in Jamaica. After helping to nurse him in his last illness, he took leave of him on board the fatal ship in which he left the island. He always comes up to me as an old friend when I enter the evening circle, and he is so sanguine in his belief that Charles will soon be heard of again, that he reanimates me.

"When I am talking to him I sometimes forget my new position, until Lady Diana hurries me to the piano, or to some other office which may break a tête-à-tête between her nephew and her governess; then next morning I am talked at perhaps for half an hour.

"This morning I could bear it no longer. I told her I was sorry that we did not suit

each other, and that I must request permission to depart. She looked amazement. My aunt's tortoise-shell cat, attacked by a mouse, could not look more astonished; and, like puss, she would not release her victim.

"Her arrangements, she said, were not to be interfered with by my caprices, or her dear children's education neglected. I must stay out my half year, or until she could hear of another governess; and this I must submit to, for, in truth, I have not money enough remaining to pay for my journey to Clifton, to rejoin my aunt. Now I must hear Master Montague say his spelling lesson. Adieu!

"Ever yours,

"HARRIET VERNON."

Miss Vivian to Miss Vernon.

"Brock Street, April.

"My dearest Harriet,

"My fate is decided. My father arrived here the day before yesterday. He was looking very ill, for he had suffered from gout all

the passage, and this badly prepared him for the shock which he was to receive. It destroyed his usual self-possession. I never saw him really moved before. The evening of his return was the most wretched that I ever spent. I can understand, now, poor mama's despondency.

"Yesterday morning he seemed more cheerful, and sent for me to come to him soon after breakfast. He was alone in the dining-room, and called me to sit near him. I felt that my hour of trial was come.

"He explained to me, — what, in fact, I knew before, — that Y. and Co.'s failure leaves us without any provision, except his pension as lieutenant-general. He then told me what he believed to be the amount of our debts; not much less than five thousand pounds, which, he says, at his time of life, is more than the value of his pension. So that the only means of saving him from the King's Bench or the Isle of Man, and my mother and myself from poverty and wretchedness, is my accepting Captain Myers.

"'He would not urge this,' he said, 'if I

had any other preference, or if any reasonable personal objection existed; but Captain Myers was amiable, young, handsome, and gentlemanly; and he could not believe that I should refuse him; if, indeed,' he added, 'he is still disinterested enough to persevere.' I yielded. What else could I do? I promised, that if these proposals were renewed, I would accept them.

"This morning Captain Myers saw my father alone. He must have been expected, for he was shown at once to the dining-room; then he joined my mother and myself up stairs.

"Mama left us alone. I was passive; my mind was made up; my promise had been given. You can easily imagine what followed. The proposal was made, and accepted. Nothing could be kinder that Captain Myers's manner. Is he really improved, or do I only try to believe so? I ought to be, and I hope I am, very grateful to him for his generous assistance. I ought to esteem his many excellent qualities. I ought to do much more. What a misfortune it is, that our affections are

not in our control? Strong will may compass many things, but can it subdue the heart? I fear not; but I will try. I feel more tranquil now that all is over.

"My father looks satisfied, and my mother quite happy. How I wish you were here! I had a kind note from your aunt, from Clifton; she writes in better spirits than usual; she says she has quiet, nice lodgings. How she must miss you!

"Ever yours,
"EMILY VIVIAN."

"Brock Street, May.

"My dearest Harriet,

"I am glad that you have met Captain O'Halloran. I recollect him so well, and liked him so much. What a pleasant evening we spent together at Spanish Town! I danced with him at the Colts' ball; the recollection is fresh in my memory. Your poor brother was with us, and the next day accompanied us in our beautiful drive to the Bogwalk. Shall I ever forget it? How Captain O'Halloran's hopes, that your brother may yet return, must

cheer your distresses. No ray breaks on my future; and yet I am angry with myself for saying so. Is it not a great happiness to know that I am doing my duty?

"My father is now cheerful; his gout is so much better, that he rode with me yesterday. I had promised to try the mare which Captain Myers talked so much about in our last walk to Charlcomb. She is a beautiful creature, but not so pleasant in her paces as my dear Busaco. Captain Myers took us to Lansdown, and we had a pleasant canter on the turf as far as the Monument. He then proposed our returning by a different road, and we turned off the high road, opposite the third milestone, towards the sequestered village of Langridge. He wished, he said, to see it again, for the happiest days of his boyhood had been spent there, when a pupil at its pretty parsonage-house.

"The lane descended from the downs, and led us through a wooded valley, green with copses and studded over with ancient-looking farm-houses. About one-third of the way down was the parsonage, very small, but very

pretty, long and low; nestled under a sheltered bank, it looked the picture of peaceful rest.

"Captain Myers was delighted to renew his acquaintance with two fine walnut trees in a field close to the house; he had often climbed them, as a boy; and with a row of pines, whose fruit he used to gather, and burn.*

"A mile lower down we passed the little church. Here the valley is very wooded, and a rapid stream brawls through it, on its way to Swanswick, where it is degraded to the office of turning some powder-mills.

"We returned home through Batheaston. The day was beautiful, and I really enjoyed my ride. I thought Captain Myers, when he talked of his boyhood at Langridge, showed more feeling than I used to give him credit for. My father is delighted with him.

"Pray remember me to Captain O'Halloran, and tell him that I have preserved the

* The pretty parsonage, the walnut trees, and the pines are all gone. A staring yellow house occupies the site of the one, and the others have been cut down to make room for its offices.

beautiful shells which he collected for me. I am so glad you have met him.

"Yours ever,

"EMILY VIVIAN."

The same to the same.

"Brock Street, May.

"My dearest Harriet,

"My father has just returned from a short visit to London; he had to make his bow at the Horse Guards. He is in unusual spirits, for he saw our cousin, the managing partner in that fatal bank. They hope that their affairs are not in so desperate a condition; and if bankruptcy cannot be avoided, still there will be a dividend. Oh, that this good news had come a little sooner! it is now too late. My promise has been pledged. What is, must be! and these regrets are weak and foolish; still I cannot conquer them.

"I heard of you this morning from Miss Chichester, who says that she has been spending a week at Watercove. She tells me that

Captain O'Halloran is in love with the beautiful governess; that she never saw an unfortunate young gentleman make a greater fool of himself; and how that clever woman, Lady Diana, can suffer such a dangerous inmate to remain in her house is more than she can account for.

"At another time I might have been amused by her enumeration of all your mischievous qualities.

"Yours, as ever,

"EMILY VIVIAN."

Miss Vernon to Miss Vivian.

"Watercove.

"My dearest Emily,

"I was prepared for the sacrifice which your letter announces to me. I knew that your sense of duty would prevail over every other feeling.

"How fate disposes of us, and how little does it care about our wishes or intentions! I

had indulged myself in planning such a different future for you; but all this is over.

"The account which you give me of Miss Chichester's news would have amused me, were I not too uneasy on the subject. Captain O'Halloran is still here; and much as I enjoy his society, I shall be glad when the day fixed for his departure arrives. He joins me in my walks, watching opportunities of meeting me; but what can all this lead to? I cannot listen to proposals which would be disapproved by his family. I wish this was over.

"Captain Moneymore has returned to London, so that Lady Diana, having no longer to fear for her son, has turned to scolding her nephew.

"This morning he joined me in the garden, instead of going in to lunch. He was talking, as usual, about Charles, when her Ladyship pounced upon us. He made me take his arm as we saw her striding down the walk towards us, for I could not conceal my trepidation. His decided manner rebuked her, and for the first time I saw her restrain her temper; but it is

only suppressed, and I shall have to endure it all in the school-room to-morrow morning. This evening there is a party, and there will be music. I am expected to attend, and must now prepare my dress.

"Yours ever,

"HARRIET VERNON."

The same to the same.

"Down Terrace, Clifton.

"My dearest Emily,

"You see by my date that I have left Watercove, as you probably foresaw. I told you in my last letter that a storm was louring. I was obliged to show myself at the party that evening, and I was called upon to play and sing. Captain O'Halloran's attentions were more marked than usual. He stood behind me, turned over the leaves of my music, and made me very uncomfortable.

"Then a carpet dance was proposed. He

wanted me to dance with him, and when I refused he sat by me the remainder of the evening.

"The next morning brought Lady Diana to the school-room. I dreaded a repetition of former scenes, but I was mistaken; she came to dismiss me, tendered to me money, the amount she said of a quarter's salary, and requested me to leave the house as quickly as I could.

"'The carriage,' she said, 'is ordered to be round at two o'clock. I hope that you can manage to be ready by that time.'

"On arriving at Exeter I took a place in the Bristol mail. Conceive my surprise, on turning round to leave the coach office, to see Captain O'Halloran standing behind me. He too, he said, was going to Clifton, and should have the happiness of escorting me. I was perplexed; but what could I do? Half an hour after the mail started, and for a couple of hours we were the only inside passengers.

"Captain O'Halloran said that he had followed me from Watercove for the sole purpose

of escorting me; then he expressed his indignation at the usage which I had met with in his aunt's house; told me how the unprotected situation of his friend's sister had at first interested him, how this feeling had ripened into admiration and love, and ended—but you must guess the rest. I replied that I could give him no answer until my brother's fate was decided; but in the meanwhile he has permission to see my aunt. I felt relieved from my strange position when the mail stopped at Bridgewater, and a Quaker and his wife got in and accompanied us to the grim city of Bristol.

"Here, just at day-break, Captain O'Halloran put me and my trunks into a hackney coach, and I was soon at my aunt's bed-side. After some hours' sleep I told her all my story, and she approves of my conduct. Captain O'Halloran called in the afternoon, and my aunt saw him: he will take charge of this letter, for he goes to Bath to-morrow. He intends to divide his time between Bath and Clifton.

"Ever yours,

"HARRIET VERNON."

Captain O'Halloran told his story before the letter was read. He made no secret of his engagement, for Harriet's consent had been given, subject to her brother's approval, and that he was sure of, whenever Vernon re-appeared, an event which he talked of as if it had been certain. In the mean time, though nominally living at Bath, he was constantly at Clifton.

The day was not fixed for Emily Vivian's marriage: she begged for time, and for a while Captain Myers was satisfied with being the acknowledged lover of the beauty of the season. But she did not go into society so much as he wished. His admiration and his love (if such they could be called) were rather reflected than original impressions. As he seldom thought for himself, if the radiance of the gem which he had appropriated had not been first seen and acknowledged by the world, he never would have perceived its value or cared to win it. He worshipped her in society, for there he saw the sensation which she created; in the family circle at Brock Street he felt out of his element.

His education had been superficial; he could

not talk to the General on politics, which he never cared for, nor about his former profession, for six or seven years home service idled away in a regiment of dragoon guards left little worth communicating. He knew nothing of literature, which brought back school horrors to his recollection; and he did not affect to understand pictures or music.

He got on best with Mrs. Vivian; but she became a little tired sometimes of his dissertations on dress and equipage, and could not always help yawning when he talked about Melton and his hunters, or repeated anecdotes of his own particular London circle, which did not happen to be that of his auditors. With Emily conversation was still more up-hill work; he could not always compliment her, for that would not be good taste; books were tabooed, and her presence began to awe almost as much as it had charmed him.

As this unaccustomed life wearied him he became impatient for change, and tried to fix the day which would give him the power of removing his conquest to other circles, where she could be not only displayed but improved. He

would cure her of her only positive blemish, that of being somewhat of a blue ; books should be banished — all except the Sporting Magazine and the Racing Calendar ; and she should learn to hunt and to drive — accomplishments far more useful than drawing and music.

He was aided by General and Mrs. Vivian, and also by circumstances. The house in Brock Street was to be given up. Doctor P., now that his fees diminished in frequency, discovered that sea air was the best thing for Mrs. Vivian. A small villa at Stoke, near Plymouth, had been offered to General Vivian during the absence of the owner in London, and it was convenient that the marriage should take place before they left Bath.

The following letter best shows her feelings : —

" Brock Street.

" My dearest Harriet,

" The day is fixed. On the 31st of this month I claim the promise which we made to each other long, long ago, that whichever of us was first married, the other should be her brides-

maid; and you must now be near me on that formidable morning.

"The ceremony is to be performed by our cousin, the Bishop. I believe that I am then to be taken to Cheltenham. My father and mother go to Myrtle Lodge, near Plymouth. Dr. P. now tells mama that sea air is all that she requires; if he had said so six months ago, it might have changed all my future life.

"Captain O'Halloran has called on us very often: he improves on acquaintance. He has much information and talent. How fortunate you will be!

"Benson has just come to tell me that Madame Le Blanc is with mama in her room, and I must go. It puts me in mind of decking with garlands a victim.

"Yours still

"EMILY VIVIAN."

CHAPTER X.

On a bright tropical afternoon, the very day on which the first of the foregoing letters was written, a set of happy-looking tourists were sitting after dinner, in front of a large tent at the Falls of the Essequibo river. Nothing could be more charming than the spot where this pleasure party were assembled.

To the left, the roaring river came down rushing and foaming over a chain of round white rocks; below the falls it spread into a deep bason, the white sandy bottom visible through the blueish water.

Here the tent was pitched. Some way lower down, a large decked boat, cutter rigged, might be seen at anchor, in the middle stream.

The party consisted of a middle-aged gentlemanly looking planter, his wife, her two daughters, and maiden sister; these were the hosts, and evidently English.

The guests who were seated round them were

a Major Alexander of the * * * regiment, his young wife, and a Lieutenant Blagrave of the engineers; all from the garrison of the neighbouring colony of Demerara. Mr. B. was fiscal of the colony, and had to transact business at the western frontier with an inferior officer, there called a postholder, who, under the fiscal's superintendence, exercised such authority as was claimed by the colony over the neighbouring tribes of Indians. The rest of the party accompanied him as his guests. The distance of the falls from the settlements on the coast is such that it had taken seven days to accomplish the voyage, in Mr. B.'s fast droger; but the weather was fine, and the scenery of the river interesting. During the day they sailed or used their sweeps against the stream; at night they anchored, gave up the cabins to the ladies, and pitched the tent on the bank for the men.

The negro crew were selected as servants as well as boatmen. They had to manage not only the vessel, but the European luxuries which they carried with her into the wilderness. This was their last day; they were to begin their return to the coast the next morning.

The dinner was over, and they were lying on boat cloaks and shawls spread under the shade of a large hardwood tree, enjoying the breeze from the river and the roar of the cataract.

A dessert of tropical fruits spread on the grass was yet trifled with by the ladies, while the men were finishing a bottle of Madeira cool from the river.

"What a change," said Major Alexander, "this is from the hot unwholesome swamps of the coast! it gives one new life. Blagrave, can you reach me one of those oranges?"

"Here, Alexander; the smooth-skinned ones are the best. How clear that water is as it runs past us! who could suppose that it is the same Essequibo which is so thick and muddy near the coast?"

"That is not our river's fault," said Mr. B.; "it is beautifully clear, as you may recollect, as soon as you get beyond the reach of the tide."

"Yes; nothing so proves the vast size of the Oronoko," said Lieutenant Blagrave, "as the way in which its waters discolour the sea, and render it yellow and turbid for hundreds of miles

from its mouth. Is the Demerara river equally clear high up, Mr. B.?"

"No; its bed is not sandy as that of the Essequibo. Won't you take some more wine?"

"No, I thank you; but before we leave this delicious spot may we not entreat Miss B. to give us one of the songs, which, when we were in the tent last night, came so sweetly from the yacht?"

"I am afraid the waterfall will drown our voices; but if Anne and Mary will join me, we will try the Canadian boat song."

The song was sweetly sung, and, notwithstanding the roar of the falls, was listened to by more ears than the songstresses were aware of.

"Look there!" said Mrs. B., as soon as the song was finished. "I would not interrupt you, but who can those three savage-looking men be? and what can they be doing here? Don't you see them? there — just behind that steep pointed rock over the falls. They are not Indians, for two of them have long beards."

"They must be a party of wood-cutters," answered Mr. B.; "but I did not think that

they ever wandered so far up the river, and, wild-looking as they often are, I never saw any half so uncivilised as these ruffians."

"May they not be deserters?" said Major Alexander. "The * * * regiment had some men missing a few months ago, who were supposed to have been drowned by the upsetting of a boat on the Demerara river. I really think that these must be the very men. Two of them have a military carriage. I will go and examine them."

"Pray, don't go near those dreadful-looking creatures, my dear," said Mrs. Alexander; "they may attack you with their clubs, or throw you into the river."

"We will all go," said Mr. B.; "and, as the ladies look frightened, we will take two of the boatmen with us. Here, Peter! King George! take Mr. Blagrave's fowling-piece; it is under that tree, and follow behind us."

And the three gentlemen, escorted by the two servants, advanced towards the uncouth-looking strangers, who moved forward to meet them as soon as they perceived that they were seen.

Two of them were tall, active-looking men; and, as Major Alexander scanned their erect figures and free carriage as they strode forward, he whispered to Mr. B.,

"Deserters, I am sure. Had you not better tell Peter and King George to steal round and get in their rear, so that they may not escape when they find themselves detected."

As they approached, the appearance of the strangers became yet more suspicious. The beards of the two taller men had not been shaved for weeks, their clothes were in rags, and one of them was barefooted. The third was shorter, of a slight make, and had little or no beard. All looked wild, haggard, and exhausted, as if enduring both hunger and fatigue. They came on boldly, however, and seemed to be foreigners, for the oldest looking said something to one of his companions in a language which was not English or Dutch.

"Stand, and surrender!" said Major Alexander, still believing that they were deserters.

"Who are you?" asked the fiscal. "Have you a licence for wood-cutting?"

"Somos Españoles?" asked Lieutenant

Blagrave, proud of his accomplishments as a linguist.

"Tan till dere, you damn runaway rascals!" exclaimed black Captain Peter, who had now got behind the intruders, and was pointing his gun at them.

Thus accosted, and menaced on all sides, the suspected men stood still, but looked hardened and unabashed. Major Alexander, overflowing with military zeal, was on the point of stepping forward to seize by the collar the foremost, who provoked him especially by the audacious way in which he continued to stare at him, when the man exclaimed,

"Alexander, I did not quite recognise you at first, though I thought I knew your voice. How rejoiced I am to meet you here!"

"If you do know me, you might at least call me by my rank. I am Major Alexander. I don't recollect you; but, if my suspicions prove true, I fancy you will not rejoice that you have met with me. And yet — but it cannot be: were you ever at Eton, sir?"

"Yes, Alexander, and your fag there. Ten years have no doubt so changed the little boy

Vernon, of the fourth form, who used to get your breakfast at Dame Holt's, that you could not recognise me, even were I more like my usual self. You are less changed in appearance, and as impetuous as ever."

"And rejoiced to meet you, Vernon," said Major Alexander, now seizing his hand. "But, in God's name, where do you come from? I had heard that you had leave from your regiment. I inquired for you at the agent's before I sailed for the West Indies."

"The story is long, and I will tell it to you hereafter. Now permit me to present to you my friend, Colonel Sanchez, of the *Royal* Spanish service," pointing to the other bearded man; "this is my trusty servant, Carlos. And now, pray introduce me to your friends, and let us move to your tent, and thank those ladies for their song, the first English sounds which I have heard for months. They seemed to come from heaven."

Mr. B. and Mr. Blagrave bowed to Vernon and Colonel Sanchez, and Peter brought down his gun, telling King George, "Hi dem no rascal, dem Massa Alexander's friends. Any

body eber see buckra gentleman before hab long beard like for Jew, go barefoot lik niger, and wear clothes not wort one fivepenny bit!"

This scene had been watched with much alarm by the distant group of ladies; but when they saw the bearded, savage-looking men approaching, their terror was uncontrollable.

"What can they be coming here for?" said Mrs. B.

"There are more of them, I am sure, hiding in the woods all round," screamed Mrs. Alexander.

"We shall all be murdered: let us run to the boat," shrieked the maiden aunt. And they all jumped up and fluttered away, like a covey of startled partridges, as Vernon and Sanchez advanced to the tent.

The objects of their alarm surveyed one another, and each attributed the panic to the grotesque appearance of his companions, for not one of the three knew how extraordinary his own looks were.

In time the alarm was got over, and, one by one, the re-assured ladies returned.

Peter and King George spread a cloth on

the grass, and brought out from the tent a noble round of beef, the remains of a roast turkey, a ham, and a real wheaten loaf; and the famished wanderers feasted with a delight which mere food probably never gave them before.

"Why, you are more ravenous, Vernon," observed Sanchez, as he helped him again to the beef, "than you were at the old padre's dinner at St. Eustatia."

Vernon smiled, but could not answer; for he held to his lips a silver goblet foaming with London porter.

Every thing in this world has an end, so at last the meal was finished.

The sun had set, and as the dew fell heavily the party adjourned to coffee in the tent, and the strangers were requested to tell their story, and how they came to issue from the falls of the Essequibo like Sinbad, when he emerged from the caverns of Serendib.

Thus pressed, Vernon, as spokesman, told, though with less detail, what the reader already knows of his adventures from the day that he left Jamaica, till he sickened in Xaltalma's hut.

"I was," he continued, "for several weeks too ill to attempt to proceed; of course I could get no medical aid. Old Xaltalma would have poisoned me had she been permitted to dose me; but this was prevented by Colonel Sanchez. At last nature, and a good constitution, set me on my legs again. During my illness Colonel Sanchez had gained from our Indian friends much information as to our route. We started magnificently. We had, through the agency of Carlos, hired two young men to accompany us to a friendly tribe, three days' march to the south-east.

"These men carried some provisions, and our valises; Carlos had his gun and ammunition, and though not the most successful of hunters, he always added some game to our stock. Money, though not quite so powerful in the wilderness as in cities, still exercised its magic: it smoothed our way, and passed us on from one tribe of Indians to another, until we found that we had reached Portuguese Guiana, though no visible barrier marked the boundary. Here we encountered the white man again, and we found him less honest and

less hospitable than the savage. The military commandant at the first Portuguese post arrested us as vagabonds and suspicious persons. He was a mean mercenary functionary, and, after we had been detained a week, Sanchez, who appeared to understand him, obtained our release by the surrender of nearly all the gold that we had with us. We had still many days' journey between us and this colony. Having little money left, we avoided civilisation, and made our resting-places at Indian camping grounds; but even here we found that our poverty made us less welcome. Carlos was obliged to barter his gun for guides and food. We were often on the verge of starvation, sometimes bewildered as to our course, our clothes became rags, our shoes wore out, and our beards grew. Yesterday we had no food but an armadillo, which Carlos tracked to its hole and roasted for our supper. To-day we had eaten nothing, and were uncertain as to our path: we feared as we toiled on that we had mistaken our direction, and were lost in the forest. We often stopped and listened to hear the roar of the river, or the falls

which we had hoped to reach before night; and again and again we fancied that we heard sometimes one and sometimes the other, but it was only the land wind sighing in the forest. Disappointed, faint, and thirsty, we staggered onwards: at last I thought I could distinguish the longed-for sounds. We stopped again, and for a while our quick breathing deadened our sense of hearing. After an anxious pause the breeze wafted the sound of falling waters more distinctly; we forgot our fatigue, and hurried on in the direction from which it proceeded.

"As we came nearer, music seemed to float in the air and mingle with the noise of the cataract. I soon recognised the familiar cadence of the Canadian boat song, and the first English words that I had heard for months thrilled to my heart. There was no mistaking the sweet soft melody: it could only be women's or angels' voices. I thought I was in a happy dream, or that fatigue, hunger, and anxiety had turned my brain. I listened again, and still my ear drank in the sounds. 'Where should this music be, in air or earth?' I repeated

to myself as I ran forward to the spot where you first saw us, and then—but you know the rest."

"Oh yes," said the elder Miss B., laughing, "then you frightened away your angels. How could you all come rushing down to us when you must know that you look scarcely human? Mrs. Alexander and my nieces are not yet quite recovered from their terror. But we must forgive you, as we are so obliged to you for your story; it would make a novel: don't you think so, Major Alexander?"

"Yes, if the world would believe it; but it is an old saying, that truth is stranger than fiction; and now that your adventures are over, Vernon, to-night you will of course share our tent."

"And to-morrow, Captain Vernon," added Mr. B., "you and your Spanish friend must join our party on our return to the coast. You must come to Hustederan with us, and afterwards we will arrange about sending you on to Demerara."

The ladies now withdrew to their cabin in the boat, and the men arranged their rough

sleeping accommodations in the tent. Major Alexander congratulated Vernon on his promotion to a majority.

"The packet brought out the Gazette more than a month ago. I wonder that you did not hear it."

"You forget where I was, Alexander: the London Gazette does not yet find its way to the Iribi creek. Good night."

At sunrise next morning Vernon rose refreshed by rest and sleep, and found a delicious bath in the clear deep waters of the river just below the falls. The party were then summoned to breakfast on board the boat, the tent was taken on board, and the yacht was soon after under weigh, and gliding down the glassy river. The scenery of its banks was lost on Vernon. He was satiated with rivers and woods; but he delighted in the intelligent conversation of his companions.

He thirsted for English news, and heard with astonishment of the vast changes which were taking place in Europe, where Napoleon, driven back to France, had turned on his pur-

suers, and was in the midst of the fierce struggle that ended by his retreat to Elba.

English newspapers and magazines were lying about the cabin, and Vernon luxuriated in bodily rest and mental food.

Lieutenant Blagrave was delighted to talk Spanish with Colonel Sanchez, and thus three or four days quickly passed.

The river, fed by tributary creeks, grew wider as they descended, until the influence of the tide discoloured its waters. Tiger Island was reached, and the boat steered through the narrow channel on its left side, and anchored opposite to the sugar estate of Hustederan, where the party landed. The house was near the river, an old Dutch mansion, embosomed in trees, the remains of an aboriginal forest, once full of deer. No trace of these now remained except in the name of the house, Hustederan, or house of the deer. The party were welcomed and entertained with true West Indian hospitality, from which they could not escape for a day or two.

In the meanwhile, Vernon and his friend reformed their outward man. Their beards had

been already removed, and now they borrowed garments of their friends; and, at last, as black King George told Vernon when he surveyed him, attired in a coat of Major Alexander's, a waistcoat which belonged to his master, and nether garments which had originally been intended for the shorter legs of Lieutenant Blagrave.

"You look really handsome now, Major, like good Christian gentleman, only your trousers *lilli* bit too short."

It had been arranged that Mr. B.'s boat, now no longer used as a yacht, but degraded to the meaner use of carrying sugar hogsheads and rum casks to the wharf at Demerara, should also take the guests thither. And the next morning they bid adieu to Hustederan, embarked again on board the droger, and were soon outside the fertile island of Zelandia, bumping on the hard sandy bar which renders the Essequibo river unnavigable for ships of any burden, and obliges the planters to send all their produce to Demerara for shipment.

By dint of poling and sounding, and rowing,

and cursing, and praying to St. Antony, black Captain Peter and his sable crew got the droger across the bar, and setting all sail, the trim boat dashed onwards through the muddy sea, passed the low green island of Walhenham, and ran down the long line of low bush which extends along the margin of the coast.

The land is so flat, that the trees appear growing out of the water. Now and then, the tall chimney of a boiling-house, or the revolving sails of a windmill, overtopped this screen of bush, betokening habitation and cultivation further in land.

Then the tall lighthouse on the Demerara river appeared in front, and looked as if it rose far out from the sea.

The light droger bounded over the bar, here all mud, and therefore not so formidable as that at Essequibo, and passing Camphouse, the governor's residence on the left, entered the river, and was soon alongside of one of the wooden wharfs, or stellings, as they are called, in Water Street, in the old Dutch town of Stabroeck.

Here the passengers landed and separated;

Major and Mrs. Alexander, and Lieutenant Blagrave going to Eveleary barracks, while Vernon and Colonel Sanchez proceeded to Mrs. Thomas's comfortable (if indeed any thing can be so called in Demerara) lodging house in the new English town of George Town, which was then rising and spreading itself on the coast at the outskirts of its Dutch parent.

Aided by Major Alexander's recommendation, Vernon easily obtained cash for his English bills, and he drew largely; for he not only supplied all Colonel Sanchez's immediate wants, but forced on him a farther loan when he embarked a day or two afterwards for the Havannah, the governor of which was his relation, and could enable him to find out his regiment, and return to it.

Carlos, now better dressed than he had ever been before in his life, and elate with the promise of becoming the Colonel's head groom, accompanied his master. His services had been compensated, as far as mere money could compensate them; but his happiness was not without alloy. An anxiety, which he had never felt before afflicted him: he was afraid of being

robbed; the care of so many doubloons disturbed his peace of mind, and made him grave and thoughtful.

"Farewell, my dear companion of the wilderness," said Sanchez on the stelling, as he saw the boat approach which was to take him to his ship in the river. "I will write to you when I rejoin my regiment, but I return to it with little hope; the cause which my duty calls me to support is a falling one. Nothing could have been easier than to put down the rebellion of the colonies, if vigorous measures had been resorted to at first. The insurgents would then have been dispersed like chaff before the disciplined royalist troops, but now we have taught them how to fight; their very defeats have given them lessons; and, with confidence, and, what will follow confidence, with numbers, they will drive the king's troops out of the country. Such has always been the growth of rebellion, if not trampled out at first."

The parting was sorrowful; each had risen in the others estimation by long companionship in difficulties and dangers, and each had his own gloomy anticipations.

Colonel Sanchez told his sorrows and forebodings; Vernon hid his, for shame and remorse mixed with his recollections, and clouded his hopes.

No vessel was sailing for Jamaica. The merchants told Vernon that he must wait for the next English mail-boat, unless the army brigantine, "The Duke of York," then at Berbice, should touch at Demerara on her way back to Barbadoes.

The appearance of the town was then, and indeed is now, peculiarly and hatefully Dutch; canals run through the principal streets and give names to them. Vernon's lodgings were in the Middle *Dam*, his merchants resided on the Front *Dam*, and he was directed to a tailor on the Back *Dam*. These are the main arteries from which smaller channels branch off; the town is consequently full of wooden bridges. All these dams act as drains; the whole town stands so low that the sea and river are level with their banks at high water, and the spring-tide would overflow the basements, if not kept out by the barrier of a line of sea dam.

The sluices, therefore, towards the river and the sea are kept closed till the tide ebbs, and then opened till the return of the flood; during which interval the accumulated water is drained off, leaving the canals for the time empty, but they soon fill again from the moisture exuding through the swamp on which the town stands.

These dams when empty are disgusting; the sun draws up fetid smells, charged with fever; and the black mud and slime which are left bare, swarm with crabs, and toads, and all sorts of loathsome reptiles. The town seems intended both by nature and by art for Dutchmen or bull frogs. Good water, too, is scarce. There are no springs or wells in British Guiana, and the tide ascends the rivers, so that rain water, preserved in iron tanks and water buts, is the only resource for drinking and cooking. The appearance of the inhabitants shows the place to be as unhealthy as it looks. The men are yellow-visaged and bloated, and the women thin, pale, and hollow-eyed; it is a place that a goul would gloat over.

Vernon promised Major Alexander to dine with him at the mess of the * * * regiment.

At six o'clock he found his way to the Eveleary barracks, which are built on an inconvenient plan, and on an old Dutch site; a canal on one side, and a crowded grave yard, to windward, on the other. They were then, too, over-crowded.

A dry season had so exhausted the supply of fresh water, that both the townspeople and the military were put on allowance; a great misery everywhere, but intolerable under the tropics. The ordinary sickliness of the troops had been increased, a short time before Vernon's visit, by more than usual exposure to climate, while quelling a short-lived insurrection of the slaves.

Very few acts of retaliation against the white population were committed by the negroes during the short period that they were masters. No servile outbreak was ever so free from crime; at least on the side of the slaves, for equal moderation did not follow the speedy re-establishment of the colonist's rule.

They had been very much alarmed, and cruelty generally waits on cowardice; hangings and scourgings marked the recovery of the white man's power, and the missionary Smith,

condemned to death by a court-martial, composed chiefly of militia officers, planters and merchants, was lingering in a close unwholesome prison, awaiting the confirmation or reversal of his sentence by English authority.

The reversal, as the reader probably may recollect, came too late. Mr. Smith died of fever in his prison.

"I fear that your fine regiment has suffered terribly from the climate of this wretched swamp," said Vernon to his friend, as he looked at the sickly countenances around the mess table.

"Yes, the * * * regiment has been stationed in these colonies for two years; the first year we lost one-third of our men; this year the casualties will amount to one half; and of those who survive, few will be again useful soldiers. This intermittent fever when it does not kill, saps the constitution."

"You have a wing of the regiment at Berbice; has it been more healthy?"

"It has suffered rather less; not quite in the same proportion. This place is a perfect Golgotha; if it is necessary to have white troops here they should be relieved often, or the men's

hearts fail them; they despair of ever leaving the colony, and the first illness ends them. The officers do not suffer in the same proportion, because they can always get home. The regiment has had a promise from head-quarters of being removed, or I should soon have scarcely an officer with it; to tell you the truth, I would not remain myself, but that the colonel is absent on sick-leave."

The next day Vernon was engaged to a family dinner with Mr. Van der Struss, the merchant to whom he had been introduced.

The dinner was at the early hour of three, then common, in order to reserve the evening for an excursion. At five o'clock an open carriage was brought to the door, and Vernon accompanied his host and hostess in their accustomed evening drive on the Ring road, the corso of George Town. It runs between two deep trenches or wet ditches for about four miles parallel with the river, through sugar plantations on each side, and fringed occasionally with rows of cabbage trees and cocoanuts, till the Houston estate is reached.

Here there is an open space where a turn

forming a segment of a large circle, gives its name to the road. Here every body turns round and returns the same way.

"Have you no variety in your rides and drives, Mrs. Van der Struss?" asked Vernon.

"No; the river you may observe shuts us in on one side, the sea on the other, so that there is only this road, and the windward one; but there the mosquitoes and sand-flies are intolerable, so that no one would ever go there a second time who could help it. I tried it once, and my face was swelled for a week after."

"You must be very tired of this weary round?"

"Oh dear, no, not at all; one meets all one's acquaintances; you see how crowded it is. The drive on the Ring road is the great pleasure of the day. I don't know how we could live without it."

"Or with it," thought Vernon, as he compassionated his Demerara acquaintance.

CHAPTER XI.

THE following day the brigantine Duke of York, a sort of military yacht attached to the quarter-master-general's department at Barbadoes, and employed in taking staff or regimental officers to the different stations in the West Indian command, arrived in the river.

Vernon easily obtained an order for his passage, and rejoiced when he saw the feverish swamps of Demerara fading in the distance, as the fast-sailing little brigantine dipt and rose like an osprey over the yet mud-coloured waves on her way to Barbadoes.

The passengers were assembled in a roomy cabin under a raised poop, surrounded by jalousied windows, and every contrivance to admit air and keep out the sun.

They consisted of a staff surgeon on a medical tour, an assistant commissary-general on his way to Antigua, and a sick captain from Berbice, ordered to Barbadoes for change of air.

The captain and the company were expatiating on the miseries which they had endured at Berbice, its deadly fevers, and the absence of all that makes life enjoyable.

Old Doctor Elliot, the staff surgeon, estimated Berbice very differently. The climate was not bad, he said, if people would live differently; he had never had fever himself, and other people need not get it unless they chose. He was opposed to all change: the barracks were good enough; salt beef very wholesome for soldiers; water on allowance, conducive to health; hospitals were now made too comfortable, and encouraged men to malinger and shirk duty. New barracks, or better diet, were not worth the expense. "The soldiers will drink rum and die in spite of all your efforts, and then you must recruit for others in their place, and there is an end of the matter."

Very early on the fourth day the brigantine entered Carlisle Bay. What a contrast to Demerara! The beautiful island of Barbadoes rose in gently swelling hills, green with sugar canes and Indian corn, over the cheerful-looking bay.

The town of Bridgetown, with its high

houses and old-fashioned narrow streets, crowded wharfs, and English looking stone churches, spread over the centre of the bay. On each side of the town comfortable-looking detached villas peeped out from groves of fruit trees. The beach was of fine yellow sand, and a fringe of cocoanut trees grew at the very water's edge. The English flag fluttered out in the steady sea breeze, from the round tower of the old castle, and from the mizens of two men-of-war at anchor in the harbour. Boats were plying to and fro from the numerous merchant vessels, and all seemed bustle and activity; and however foreign the whole might have appeared to a new-comer from Europe, it wore an English look to Vernon when he compared it with the scenes which he had just quitted.

The Barbadians call their island "Little England," and certainly there are more of old home habits there than in any other West Indian colony.

Vernon landed, and leaving his portmanteau at Betsy Austin's inn, where he engaged a bed, accompanied his invalid fellow passenger to the quarters of the * * * regiment at St. Ann's,

where Vernon hoped to find an old acquaintance.

Threading their way through a busy crowd on the wharfs, who were rolling sugar hogsheads from the large country waggons, drawn by oxen from the estates in the interior of the island, they crossed the wooden bridge which has given its name to the town, and passing through many narrow streets of stone houses, encountered the dust and glare of Bay Street, and ascended the hill of St. Ann's.

It was yet very early, and two regiments were under arms on the extensive park-like drill-ground. It had been a brigade field morning; the men looked bronzed by the sun, but healthy, and the strength in which the battalions mustered proved how few were in hospital. The brigade was dismissed, and Vernon was soon greeted by his friend Captain Hall. They had once occupied the same billet at Badajos. He now pressed Vernon to share his comfortable quarters in the stone barracks, a proposal the more agreeable in consequence of the noisy and disorderly reputation which Betsy Austin's inn deservedly obtained.

After breakfast Captain Hall rode down to Bridgetown with Vernon, and assisted him in making inquiries as to his passage to Jamaica. No immediate opportunity offered; and, anxious and impatient, Vernon was compelled to wait for the next Jamaica mail-packet, due from England in a week's time, which always touched at Barbadoes on its way to Jamaica. He called at Betsy Austin's, and withstood the buxom landlady's wrath, when he ordered his baggage to be removed to St. Ann's. They then rode to Pilgrim, as the Governor's house is called; a large, ancient-looking mansion, on a rising ground, outside the town, surrounded by trees and gardens; and, having left their cards, went on to Gun Hill, a military post eight miles in the interior of the island, where there is a barrack, which was then occupied by a detachment of Captain Hall's regiment. On the top of this hill stands the signal-post of the island, whence vessels in the offing are telegraphed to Government House.

The appearance of the country differed widely from that of Jamaica. There were no forests, no

bush; every inch of ground was cultivated; the very road-side was planted with vegetables; the only trees were fruit trees. The white population was larger in proportion to that of the black than in Jamaica, and the negroes were all sleek and well clothed, and looked cheerful at their work in the sugar-fields. Windmills crowned every hill, the country was dotted over with the large white stone houses of the planters, and the clustering negro villages, surrounded by orchards of fruit trees, formed a happy feature in the prospect.

Everything had an active cheerful look, the sea breeze, fresh from the Atlantic, cooled even the mid-day sun. Vernon was delighted with his ride: it was a pleasure to be again on horse-back, and everything that he observed on the sugar estates was encouraging. Here the mild rule which, with so much opposition he had begun to introduce on his own Jamaica property, appeared to have long been the established system, and tranquillity and abundant crops were the result.

A mess dinner, painfully reminding him of old times, concluded the evening.

The following day he rode again into the country, and was still more convinced, that not only could sugar be made, but that a higher state of cultivation was attained, without much apparent coercion, on the comparatively poor land of Barbadoes, than all the severity of the taskmasters could extort from the rich soil of Jamaica. The explanation was, that the slave trade had long ceased in Barbadoes; the negro population were most of them born on the island, and were comparatively civilised.

The next day he dined at the Governor's, and met a large party, chiefly civilians, merchants, and planters. Here, again, he could not but observe the superior tone of society to that which he had mixed with in Jamaica.

There, nearly all the leading men had been adventurers, had risen by their own industry and good fortune; and if they possessed any general information or civilised manners, had acquired them late in life. Here, the planters could talk of their ancestors; they had been gentry for generations, and nearly all had been sent to school in England, or *home*, as they still called the country of their forefathers; and

many had finished their education at Oxford or Cambridge.

At last, the packet signal was flying from Gun Hill; and, in a few hours afterwards, Vernon took leave of his friend at St. Ann's, and was again on shipboard. After a week's anxiety, the blue mountains rose in the horizon, and the island, which he believed to contain all that he most loved on earth, expanded before him. Visions of the past haunted him — Julia's last farewell, or his last interview with Emily Vivian under the tent in the wild ravine. He was impatient to land, though a presentiment of evil made his cheek pale.

The vessel dashed on, and anchored in Port Royal harbour. He jumped into a wherry, and was soon at Kingston.

He hurried first to his lodgings: his better spirit had the mastery, and he was eager to learn how it had fared with poor Julia, now, he believed, a mother. The house looked desolate; the windows and jalousies closed, and the front door locked. He knocked impatiently: at length it was opened by a negress,

who started back when she saw him, and ran away, screaming —

"What dis! What massa ghost come for! Cæsar! Cæsar!"

Vernon entered his own sitting-room: all his things were there — his desk and his books in their usual places; but no trace remained of her whom he was seeking.

He opened the door of the adjoining bedroom: it was empty, and the arrangements of its furniture showed that it had long been unoccupied. Dust had settled on the tables, and the air of the closed-up room was heavy and oppressive.

He returned to the sitting-room, at the doorway of which he found Cæsar, his white eyes starting from his head with terror, holding Clara behind him. She screamed again as Vernon approached, and struggled to free her hand from her husband's grasp.

"No come too near, Massa," cried out Cæsar, trembling so that he could scarcely speak; "Clara no able for tan duppy come close to her. Oh! Massa Vernon, you dead or alive?"

"Are you mad, Cæsar? Where is your mistress?" And Vernon, who had now approached close to his shrinking servant, put his hand on his shoulder to assure him of his living identity.

Poor Cæsar's terror gave way to joy. He seized and kissed his master's hand, laughed and grinned like an ogre, but did not answer the question; he was too excited to hear it.

Clara's terror, too, had subsided; but her more sensitive feelings were touched by Vernon's question, and she sank on her knees, sobbing out,

"Oh, my poor missis! poor Miss Julia! Why Massa no come back sooner?"

The truth now flashed on Vernon's mind. He threw himself on the sofa on which Julia had drawn her last breath, his image in her mind, and his name the last sound that she ever heard.

Here he listened to Clara's history of all that had happened during his absence — a tale of long-enduring grief and suffering, ending in death. What would he not now have sacrificed to lighten by a feather's weight the bur-

then of his self-reproach, even if it had been merely a belief that he had gladdened with one gleam of sunshine the last days of the victim of her blighted affection?

The child was brought to him from its grandmother's: it only added to his grief; but, for its mother's sake, he resolved to watch over its future welfare.

Fortunately for him, he could not long give way to regrets. He was responsible for the welfare of the negroes on his estates, and he feared, from circumstances which Cæsar told him, that the belief in his death had undone many of his reforms.

Mr. M'Kenzie had supposed him dead *de facto*, and had speculated upon having a long uncontrolled administration of his estates, until he should be acknowledged to be so *de jure*.

A new heading had been made in his account books. "The estates of the late Charles Vernon" were now charged with the supplies; and he was on the point of removing Mr. Scott from the management of Mount Edwards, when he heard of its owner's re-appearance as a living man.

He had not quite reconciled his mind to the change when Vernon called at his office, the day after he landed; and he felt awkward when he had to produce his cash-book with its new heading.

Vernon saw that his friend thought he ought to be as dead as the books made him, and almost resented his re-appearance as unfair.

He declined the merchant's invitation to dine with him, and went back to his lodgings to await the return of Cæsar, whom he had sent with a note to General Vivian's. Cæsar brought no answer.

"General no lib dere now, massa — house all shut up; dem tell me next door de General gone back to England; first old missis and young missis go home, den General go too: — dem all gone, massa."

Vernon felt as if the whole world had abandoned him: all he loved were gone, and the few who recollected him seemed to think his re-appearance an intrusion.

His first business was to visit his estates; but before he left Kingston he called on the Otways. Here he met with a friendly recep-

tion; and he experienced the first pleasurable emotion which had cheered him since his return to Jamaica, when Margaret Otway told him how often and how anxiously Emily Vivian had watched for tidings of his fate as long as any hope remained.

"She told me," added Miss Otway, "that she wrote to your sister by every packet. If it was only on her account that she was so anxious, she must love your sister very dearly. When the General left us suddenly last week, her pony, Busaco, was sent to us; she was very fond of him. I promised Emily to take care of him and never sell him, and he is my pet."

"Mrs. Vivian's ill health, you tell me, took her home, and of course her daughter could not leave her; but what took the General away?"

"We don't know. I have heard a report from a correspondent of mine in Bath, that Miss Vivian's marriage was talked of there to a Captain Myers, heir to a great fortune, as Miss Chichester tells me, and a title. But I don't believe it," she continued, her previous

suspicions now confirmed by Vernon's change of countenance; "my informant only mentions it as a rumour. We shall lose you next, I suppose, Major Vernon (I forgot to congratulate you on your promotion), or do you remain some time longer in the island?"

"I don't know, my plans are uncertain. I believe that I shall rejoin my regiment; but I must first reside some time on my estates here, and then ——" but conscious that he was thinking aloud, and bewildered and miserable, he mastered himself by an effort, talked to Mrs. Otway for some time about Demerara and Barbadoes, and then took leave.

On arriving at Mount Edwards, he found that a comfortable but smaller house had been constructed from the ruins, and partly furnished; for Mr. Mackenzie, when he thought himself uncontrolled manager, had intended to retire there occasionally during the hot months.

There he wrote a long letter to his sister, a sort of journal of his adventures, and in this was enclosed a much shorter one, which took him more time to compose; its contents will be transcribed hereafter.

Vernon then gave up his whole mind to ameliorating the condition of his negro vassals. He was anxious to return to England; his promotion had cancelled his leave of absence. Jamaica now contained not a single selfish inducement to detain him. He felt that he was perilling his dearest hopes and wishes; that every hour of his stay in the island endangered the future happiness of his life. Miss Chichester's story of Emily Vivian's engagement haunted his mind. But he felt also that every thing was to be sacrificed to his duty as a master. He felt that his single efforts spread happiness around him, hundreds of his fellow-creatures were dependent on his justice and on the fearful power with which bad laws had invested him: he remained at his post, and his conscience rewarded him.

CHAPTER XII.

THE bridal dresses had been sent home, the marriage settlements engrossed, and in less than a week Emily Vivian was to complete her sacrifice. She was thoughtful and tranquil, less sad than she had been, for she had exerted all her self-command to meet the occasion.

She was engaged in arranging the papers in her desk, and destroying many notes and memoranda of past scenes in Jamaica, which she vainly wished to erase from her recollection as irrevocably as the papers were read for the last time and then thrown into the grate.

The postman's knock roused her from her occupation; a letter from Harriet Vernon was brought in to her. As she opened it, a sealed enclosure dropped out. At the first glance she recognised the handwriting — it was Charles Vernon's. For an instant she gazed at the well-known writing as wildly as Cæsar and Clara had done at the living man. A faint

feeling overpowered her; but she soon mastered it, and her colour came and went, and her breathing became oppressed as she read the following letters, beginning, however, by the second: —

"Clifton, March 13.

"My dearest Emily,

"He lives, and will return to us. I have heard from my dearest Charles: he is now in Jamaica. He has gone through strange adventures, dangers, and suffering; but it is all past, and he will soon be in England. He has sent me a journal of all his wanderings, and with it the enclosed letter for you. Do not ask me, dearest, to be your bridesmaid. I could not bear to witness the ceremony; but forgive me; I will keep my promise, and be with you if you desire it; but do write to me.

"Yours ever,

"HARRIET VERNON."

Major Vernon to Miss Vivian.

"Mount Edwards, Feb. 25.

"My dear Miss Vivian,

"Long ago you must have believed me no longer a living man; and I am sure your kind heart has forgiven many of my transgressions and follies, for they have not been hidden from you.

"I felt humbled to the dust when I was told of your condescension and goodness to one now no more. I so despise myself that I can only address you by claiming the privilege of the dead—forgiveness! and believe me *I am* dead in all that was so inconstant, and so infirm of purpose.

"I have suffered much, and I trust a new and a better spirit has arisen within me. I am no longer the irresolute, vacillating creature that I was. A new life seems to open before me, ambitious, madly ambitious, perhaps, for you are now its object.

"By the memory of that fearful night of the hurricane, by all that you know I have felt

and suffered, I conjure you to give me a new trial.

"My duty to my dependents detains me here. I should be unworthy of the hopes which I cherish if I failed in my purpose, or rushed to your feet before all that I can do here is accomplished. Pity, and remember me. I enclose this in a letter to my sister. Do not, dear Emily, repel her, when she pleads for the repentant and true-hearted,

"CHARLES VERNON."

The letter dropped from Emily's hand, but not before it was blotted by a tear. Twice she held it to the taper, resolving to add it to the heap of ashes beside her; and twice she refrained. She would keep it till to-morrow, read it once more, and then burn it.

"How red your eyes are, child," said Mrs. Vivian, as Emily entered the breakfast-room next morning, and offered her usual salutation to her father and mother. "I am afraid you have caught cold; you look pale and wretched; that blue dress does not become you. You know Captain Myers made the same observa-

tion the last time you wore it; and he is such a judge of dress. He promised to be here this morning, to bring back the bracelets which had to be returned to Rundle and Bridges, to have the diamond clasp lengthened. He has exquisite taste in jewellery."

Emily sighed, and busied herself with the tea equipage to conceal the tears which dimmed her eyes, but did not overflow them.

Her father was poring over the columns of the Morning Herald, and did not perceive his daughter's agitation.

"Here is important news," he exclaimed, throwing down the newspaper so abruptly that he startled Mrs. Vivian, and made Emily upset the cream-jug.

"You never will consider my nerves, General," murmured his lady. "Emily, ring the bell, and don't look so frightened."

"Listen," said the General, impatiently, as he resumed the newspaper. "Aye, here it is, under the head of Fashionable Intelligence."

"We regret to hear that Sir Matthew Myers, Baronet, of Oak Hall, Yorkshire, is suffering from another paralytic attack; and the

most serious apprehensions are entertained of the result. The worthy Baronet has just completed his seventy-third year."

"This really is important, Emily. Did Captain Myers tell you whether he had heard lately from his uncle?"

"No, Papa."

"He will be here presently, my dear," observed Mrs. Vivian. "Do, Emily, oblige me by changing that odious blue dress; pray make a present of it to Benson. You will soon have to get mourning, and black becomes your fair complexion."

"Don't tease Emily so, my dear," said the General, angrily; "I never saw her looking better:" for a flush had overspread his daughter's face, and in spite of the blue dress she looked very handsome.

Captain Myers appeared soon afterwards. The bracelets were forgotten, for he had just heard of his uncle's death; and Sir Frederick Myers (by that name he had desired the servant to announce him), was full of his new position.

His manner was not natural, and therefore

very unpleasing. He tried to assume becoming grief for the death of his uncle; and he actually did wish that he had lived three days longer; for in three short days the beautiful girl who sat beside him, her colour heightened, and the deep blue of her eyes bright with emotion as she listened to her reprieve for three months, would have been his bride.

"My poor uncle," he said, with a forced sigh—"but it is wrong to regret; it was quite a release, he was so old, and had been so long helpless; he never recovered my cousin's death last year. I must of course attend the funeral; indeed I have already given directions about it: it must not discredit the old name. How unfortunately this event has been timed, my dear Miss Vivian; but we must submit to our disappointment. Three months will soon pass, and I shall have time to put the old Hall in order for your reception, and do a thousand things which will now be necessary; not that I mean to hide your there. I must refurnish my uncle's house in London. You were never presented, I believe. How well a court dress will become you! You will write to me when

you arrive at Myrtle Lodge, I hope. But I cannot spare more time here; I ought now to be on the north road."

He shook hands with the General and Mrs. Vivian, and for the first time presumed to expect a kiss from Emily; but she turned from his half embrace, and her pale cheek, not her lips, met his. A carriage with four posters was waiting at the door, and whirled him away, his head full of hearses and hatchments, new furniture for his London house, and Emily Vivian as Lady Myers, in a court dress.

CHAPTER XIII.

In a large brick house in Yorkshire, not far from Knaresborough, on the same day on which these events were passing in Bath, a stout, thoughtful-looking, middle-aged gentleman, with coal-black hair, a little mixed with white, was sitting alone in a small room, full of account-books and papers; rows of tin boxes surrounded the walls, many of them lettered outside with the names of the neighbouring proprietors. One of these stood open on the table, and "Sir M. Myers" could yet be traced on its faded label.

Lawyer Fairfield, as he was called in the neighbourhood, was looking over the accounts of his deceased client, to whom he had been agent for a third of a century.

"What an accumulation!" he thought to himself, as he corrected some additions that he was making; "all hoarded for poor young Matthew; and now it goes to a nephew, whom

the old man never cared about. I did think that he would remember his old friends. He was so fond of his god-child, my Fanny, too. But his end was so sudden. How foolish putting off making one's will! Why, there must be, at least, ten thousand pounds of these rents in the bank at York, besides the funded property."

And the old lawyer resumed his calculations. He was interrupted by the entrance of his only daughter — a more enchanting vision can hardly be conceived. She looked scarcely twenty, though really a year or two older.

Her slight, fairy figure was perfect, graceful, and elastic; she seemed scarcely to touch the ground as she bounded into the room, and stood beside her father.

He put down his pen, took her little hand in his, and looked fondly into her large black eyes, full of meaning and passion. Her long black hair had escaped from her cottage bonnet, and hung round her shoulders; she panted for breath; her full lips were half open, and a slight colour tinged her dark complexion.

"I was in the paddock, papa, looking at Nelly's colt, when John told me you wanted me, so I ran all the way."

"There was no occasion for such hurry, my darling," said the father; "sit down. I only wanted to tell you that I expect Sir Frederick Myers here to-morrow. He cannot go to the Hall until the funeral is over, or, perhaps, for some time afterwards. You must talk to Mrs. Wilson, and see that all is arranged as it should be. Of course, we can have no guests, but the dinner must be good, and quiet. I will give orders as to the wine. You will also speak about his room, Fanny; the bow-windowed room of course."

A change came over the clever countenance of the daughter; her eyes were fixed on the label of the box on the table, and the expression of her face became thoughtful even to severity.

"He was once in the dragoons, was he not, papa — this new lord of the Hall?"

"I have heard so."

"Fond of dress, and vain of his horsemanship?"

"Really, Fanny, I cannot tell you; but this

I do know, he is engaged to be married, so you need not throw away your smiles: of course I intend to retain the agency, and therefore we must be attentive."

"Of course, papa; and the agency is important, is it not? We must do all we can to keep up the connection. I must have the other saddle-horse brought in from grass; my own mare is in high condition. Pray send directly and get the harness of the pony-phaeton altered. I must try the new match to-morrow morning. Oh, I have so much to do!"

"Certainly, my dear Fanny, you are quite right, as you always are. Now kiss me and leave me: I ought to be very busy."

The sylph-like form of the dark-eyed fairy bent over her father, and her rosy lips imprinted a kiss on his forehead, and then he resumed his calculations.

The funeral was very grand, as all the tenants' wives and daughters said; and Sir Frederick looked well in his mourning cloak, as he stood beside the vault which contained the bones of his forefathers.

The old Hall, one of the buildings rarely to

be found out of the northern counties of England, built of stone and wood curiously intermingled, so as to give it a striped appearance, looked to him very gloomy. The old servants were liberally pensioned off, and its doom sealed.

In 1848 its fate would have been different. It would have been retained or restored with scrupulous fidelity, and filled with heavy bookcases of black oak, elaborate chests and wardrobes, tall, high-backed, narrow chairs, and tables rejoicing in legs like a centipede. But in 1815 people made themselves comfortable or uncomfortable after a classical, not a Gothic, fashion.

A new mansion, with porticoes and pillars on an Italian model, was to arise on the site of the many-gabled, high-chimneyed, quaint old house, with its richly carved oak hall, dark from the smoke of centuries, and dimly lighted by the heavy mullioned windows, still emblazoned with the armorial bearings of the Myers family, intermixed with those of many races now extinct. The frail glass had outlived the very names of these once powerful knights and barons; their proud mottoes, where they could

yet be traced in old black-letter characters, seemed a mockery of this vanity of vanities — human life. And now this last memorial was about to disappear.

Sir Frederick Myers accepted the hospitality which his agent pressed upon him. He found Holly Hill a very agreeable house, and resolved to stay there while legal business detained him in Yorkshire.

Fanny Fairfield made the most of her opportunity: she flattered and she amused him — piqued his vanity one day by flirting with Mr. Maxwell, the curate of the parish, and made her peace by worshipping him as a demigod the next.

Her extraordinary beauty had its wonted influence; and he began to believe that black eyes were more bewitching than blue.

Then her conversation was delightful; it always put him in good humour with himself and with all the world; for it was spiced with flattery so artfully administered that he never detected its peculiar flavour.

He accepted her guidance in his rides over

his property. She often took him short cuts across the fields, and leaped her well-bred mare over the fences.

On one of these occasions, as they were riding through the old park, her horse started at a stag as he rose from behind a thornbush, and then ran away with her. She sat admirably, but could not moderate its speed, for Sir Frederick imprudently followed close behind, and this impelled the high mettled Amanda to continue her wild career.

A hedge and a ditch were in front — both were cleared, and on they went, descending a steep bank till they reached a marshy hollow. Here the mare's fore feet sank, and she fell, pitching her rider forward. The ground was soft, or Miss Fairfield might have been killed ; as it was she was stunned.

Sir Frederick jumped off his horse, much alarmed, and repenting too late having attempted to follow so closely.

He lifted the senseless girl from the ground, and carried her in his arms towards a cottage at some distance. As he bore her along, her head resting on his shoulder, her breathing

became stronger, she opened her eyes, blushed, and faintly begged him to put her down; her breath fanned his cheek, and he thought she never had looked so beautiful.

"Are you much hurt, my dear Miss Fairfield?" he asked, as he laid her down on a sheltered bank. "I never shall forgive myself for causing this accident."

"Pray don't be alarmed," she replied gently: "I am not much hurt, my ankle pains me, but that is all; your groom has caught the horses, I see. Naughty Amanda! If you will help me to that flat stone I will try and mount; it is only three miles home."

The next day as she lay on the sofa, her little Cinderella foot and beautiful ankle on a cushion, Sir Frederick sat beside her, and sympathised with her father, when he called her the most charming, the best-tempered, sweetest little darling in the world. In a day or two she was well enough to allow Sir Frederick to drive her out in the pony carriage; then she was soon able to ride again, and the first of the three months had passed rapidly away. Sir Frederick Myers was still at Holly Hill, per-

suading himself that he was detained by necessary business.

An archery party succeeded, and Sir Frederick, expert at all exercises, was declared the most successful of the modern Robin Hoods. Then the ladies tried their skill, and he had to invest Miss Fairfield with the prize belt.

Races and pic-nic parties followed, and, for the first time in his life, Sir Frederick Myers was really in love. He had mistaken his admiration of Emily Vivian for a feeling which was then unknown to him; but her coldness had at length chilled him, and her superiority of intellect awed him. With Fanny Fairfield he was always at his ease, and, what was much more, his self-esteem was always gratified.

He had, he thought, been too humble; too diffident of his own merit, or he never would have sacrificed himself to Miss Vivian, beautiful as she was, but cold and unimpassioned as a statue; so different from the ardent being now beside him, whose looks always brightened at his presence, and who was the only girl that he had ever known who seemed to understand him, and to value him at his real worth.

But what was he to do? Honour forbade him to break his engagement, and he must tear himself away from Holly Hill. He would not break that dear girl Fanny Fairfield's heart.

He had been too imprudent; something dreadful might happen. She might, in her despair, fly to laudanum; prussic acid was not yet in fashion.

He believed that he had acted nobly when he found himself dining at his club in London, instead of listening to his own praises at Holly Hill. He had written to Emily Vivian on his first arrival there; the common-place nothings in his letter seemed laboured; writing was by no means his forte.

He did not receive a quick reply, and very soon he lost his impatience. When it did arrive, the day after the Archery meeting, he felt chilled and mortified.

"Myrtle Lodge.

"My dear Sir Frederick,

"I am very glad the funeral is over: it must have been very painful to you.

"We arrived here, all well; the house, or

rather cottage, is finely situated, and I enjoy my walks extremely.

"Papa took me to Mount Edgecumbe yesterday: the grounds are beautiful, and the sea-view magnificent. You will, I am sure, be happy to hear that my friend Harriet Vernon's marriage with Captain O'Halloran is very soon to take place.

"I think you told me that you wished to be in London for some time. I shall be gratified to hear that you are enjoying yourself there.

"Do not make so many apologies for not coming down here; this country would, I know, weary you. Believe me, I shall pass my time quite tranquilly here until your arrangements are completed.

"Yours, very sincerely,

"EMILY VIVIAN."

A week after Sir Frederick Myers had left Holly Hill the father and daughter were at breakfast. Mr. Fairfield was thoughtful, and even peevish; he pushed his cup from him, refused the orange marmalade (Fanny's own making), and then sank back in his chair.

"What is the matter, papa?"

"I was thinking about you, child; all your schemes have been in vain; the bird is flown. I told you that it would be of no use — an engaged man; and now your flirtations have only afforded idle gossip to our neighbours."

"We shall see: — I wanted to talk to you. I must go to my aunt, Lady Smith, in London."

"That would be too open a step, Fanny, would it not?"

"No, papa; I told Sir Frederick that I always spent a month in London with my aunt during the season, and he promised me to call in Hanover Square in person, and deliver my letter; my uncle is to ask him to dinner, and his dinners are so good. I have settled all that, and cousin Bessy is to be so pleased with him. But it won't do to trust clever Miss Bessy too far; so I must write at once to my aunt to say that I shall be in London on Saturday next——"

"And leave me here by myself: you know how wretched I shall be, Fanny."

"Oh, I will come back soon; thank you,

papa; you are always so good; there's a kiss for you."

Sir Frederick Myers was delighted to meet Miss Fairfield in London. The point of honour which made him fly from Holly Hill had cost him unceasing regret. His dose of flattery had become as craving a want as the dram-drinker's daily poison.

His conscience was quieted by the effort which he had made; but he would be guarded, and not commit himself. He made many prudent resolutions: still his horses were very often to be seen led about in Hanover Square.

Fanny Fairfield wrote constantly to her father, and one of her many letters will show the balance of her hopes and fears.

"Hanover Square, May 10.

"My dear Papa,

"You distress me so by the account of your low spirits. I must go back to you soon. I almost wish that I had never left you; this place does not suit me. I regret the rides, and the out-of-door parties in the country.

"I see a great deal of Sir Frederick Myers,

and his manner is unchanged when we are alone; but how seldom that can happen in the bustle of this restless society. He talks too of going down into Devonshire. To be sure this makes him grave and miserable; but still I am afraid that he will do so soon, and then I shall go home.

"A day or two ago he joined our party in Kensington Gardens; and for the first time since he left Holly Hill I had an opportunity of talking to him in confidence.

"He would, I am sure, give half his fortune to be released from his engagement. He confessed that it had been hastily and imprudently entered into; that he is every day more and more convinced, that in tastes and habits, both parties are unsuited; and, he did not tell me, but I think I perceived, that he cherished some vague imaginings that it might yet be broken off.

"Too sanguine as you often tell me I am, I have little hope that this can now be possible. He will never be able to extricate himself from the meshes of that artful girl. Such a match for her!—and she must love him, too, cold as

he admits her to be; for he is so handsome and so amiable, and has such exquisite taste. Cousin Bessy quite raves about him; and I almost wish that he had staid at the Hall instead of Holly Hill. My head aches, and my hand shakes. You will require your spectacles to read this scrawl. How is poor Mr. Maxwell? Does he dine with you often?

"Ever your affectionate child,

"FANNY FAIRFIELD."

CHAPTER XIV.

CHARLES VERNON remained two long months at Mount Edwards: every week seemed a year.

At last, when he had the satisfaction of seeing his system working well, and had taken every precaution that justice and humanity could suggest to ensure the utmost welfare to his negroes that the existing laws admitted, he embarked, full of hope, for England.

In our times he would already have known his fate; but in those days it required four months to write and receive an answer by return of post between Jamaica and England. So he knew nothing of Emily's fortunes until he had traced his aunt to Clifton, and the brother and sister met. Harriet broke the tidings as gently as she could, and the composure with which he listened to her at first gave her comfort. But it was assumed for her sake. His health failed, though he spoke cheerfully, and

exerted himself in smoothing away the impediments which yet existed to his sister's marriage with his old friend O'Halloran, by making such a liberal settlement, that even Lady Diana's wrath was appeased. He charged his estates with 10,000*l.* for her; and, enlightened as to legal matters by the misery which his supposed death, without having barred the entail, had occasioned, he suffered a recovery, and, in default of his own issue, gave the property to the O'Hallorans.

His wretched looks and hollow eyes checked Harriet Vernon's happiness. Still the wedding arrangements went on; and, one bright morn- in June, a bridal party issued from the little church at Charlcomb.

Separation and tears followed as usual. Captain and Mrs. O'Halloran went to Dartmouth, and Vernon to meet his regiment, which, though then in Dublin, was under orders for England.—We must now change the scene to Myrtle Lodge.

"Well, my dear," said General Vivian, putting down his newspaper as his lady entered the little sanctum which he called his

library, "what is the matter? You look disturbed."

"I have just heard news which I don't like. The * * * regiment are ordered to Plymouth, and expected to arrive every day. They replace the Fusileers at the citadel."

"Well, my dear, I don't command the garrison. What is that to me?"

"How dull you are, General. It is Major Vernon's regiment. He is at home, and must soon be here; and you must acknowledge that this will be very unpleasant. I never could discover whether he proposed to Emily before he disappeared so mysteriously; and I am afraid that she never would have accepted Sir Frederick Myers if she had not believed in the report of Charles Vernon's death. Now, in addition to Sir Frederick's unaccountable conduct in never coming near us, and writing so seldom, we shall have Major Vernon. You won't be so imprudent as to ask him here, will you?"

"I have perfect confidence in Emily's good sense and propriety, my dear. If Major Vernon does join his regiment, I shall certainly

ask him here as usual: no harm can come of it. I wish, as you say, that Sir Frederick's conduct was not so odd. He writes such unmeaning letters to Emily, that she looks mortified when she shows them to me. I wish I could believe that this is all; but her spirits are depressed too: it grieves me to look at her, generous, self-sacrificing, dear girl! and I blame myself for the way in which I urged her to accept this cold-hearted man."

"Now really, for a sensible man, you surprise me, General; but recollect hereafter that I warned you. Of course, you will do as you think best."

General Vivian withstood his wife's ill temper without losing his own, for he was in particularly good humour that morning, having just received a letter from his attorney in London, congratulating him on the large dividend declared on Messrs. Y. and Co.'s bankruptcy. Three fourths of his fortune would be recovered, and it need no longer be locked up in the banking-house.

The meeting between Charles Vernon and Emily Vivian soon took place. Each grieved

to perceive the traces of sorrow and care which had prematurely shadowed the young brow of the other. Their last meeting had been in the tent under the cliffs of the Yallass river, nearly a year before.

How long that year appeared! for its days were recorded by griefs, disappointments, and sufferings, the weary milestones of human existence; and now an insurmountable barrier was interposed between them.

The memory of the past filled their minds, and Vernon would have bartered life itself, with all its delusions, for another such hour as that passed in the hurricane at Mount Edwards. Vain and helpless repinings!

The meeting was too painful to be needlessly repeated. Vernon's visits to Myrtle Lodge were very few, though he often hovered round the spot, and watched for a passing glimpse of Emily in her morning walks through the grounds round the Lodge, and then returned to his quarters in the Citadel, and tried to busy himself with his profession.

Emily Vivian was more composed. Her habitual self-control did not fail her, and she

tried to believe that she had reconciled herself to her fate.

She had need of it all, when a letter announced Sir Frederick Myers's intention of coming to Plymouth, to arrange the fulfilment of his engagement. He was now at Southampton, where he had purchased a yacht; and he would make his first trial of the "Seagull" by a voyage to Plymouth. Half his letter was taken up with a description of the fittings of the cabin, "which he hoped would soon be graced by her presence."

The "Seagull" arrived, and at first Sir Frederick divided his days between Myrtle Lodge and his beautiful cutter; but the latter soon engaged most of his time. The watchful eyes of Mrs. Vivian soon perceived that there had been a change, and poor Emily was lectured for having chilled him by her reception. This was true, but it was also involuntary. She tried to please—to look cheerful while she was ill and miserable. Her colour had faded; her eyes were dull and heavy.

Sir Frederick wondered at his infatuation in having ever thought her so beautiful, while

Fanny Fairfield's bright looks and overflowing spirits rose to his recollection.

Emily Vivian was too much occupied in examining her own conduct to take much notice of his altered manner. She could no longer conceal from herself that the assurance which her mother had given to Sir Frederick, when she first encouraged his advances, that her daughter's affections were disengaged, was not true. Emily had not contradicted this assertion, although she felt that her not doing so implied its confirmation; but she then believed that the object of her first preference was no more. Charles Vernon had since reappeared, and her conscience told her that he was still dear to her. It was in vain that she had destroyed his letter from Jamaica. Every word was stamped on her heart. Believing, however, that Sir Frederick Myers still wished to claim her hand, she resolved to remain faithful to her promise, if he desired it when he knew all.

But, however painful, however humiliating, the confession might be, it was a duty, both to him and to herself, that he should know all.

She did not dare to hope that this explanation would release her; for had not Sir Frederick's love for her triumphed over obstacles which cool many admirers? His attentions to her began when his prospects were doubtful, and hers were brilliant. They continued after he had become rich, and she had become poor. Now she was an heiress again. What chance was there that the affection which had been constant during her adversity would disappear in her prosperity?

Emily Vivian and Sir Frederick Myers were sitting alone in a summer-house in the grounds of Myrtle Lodge. The confession had been made. Overcome by maidenly shame at having revealed the secret of her heart, she dared not lift her eyes from the ground, but sat trembling and blushing before the arbiter of her destiny.

She had tried to tell her tale so as to hurt as little as possible her hearer's vanity; but still she believed that she must have wounded him deeply. Had she ventured to look up, she would have been re-assured: an expression

of delight was brightening Sir Frederick's countenance.

"My dear Miss Vivian," he replied, after a moment's pause to collect his ideas—for never was man more taken by surprise,—"I am so rejoiced that you have had resolution to confide in me. I, too, have my secret. I dared not tell it to you; and my want of courage might have wrecked the happiness of our future lives. We were both mistaken, but now we are free. May you, my dear Emily, be as happy as I am! Shall I ride over to the Citadel, and tell all to that fine fellow, Charles Vernon?"

"Oh! pray no, Sir Frederick; add one more to the many obligations you have heaped upon me; keep my secret for the present. I will explain every thing to my father."

"I will do all and every thing you desire. And now good-bye, God bless you. I must get the 'Seagull' under weigh, and be at Southampton by to-morrow morning, and then start for Yorkshire." And wild with delight, he kissed Emily's hand, and flew off to his boat.

"Why, Emily," said her father, as she met him on her return to the house, "what has happened? I met Sir Frederick Myers just now in the lane; he ran against me, and nearly threw me down, then begged my pardon, wished me joy, and ran off again; he looked so wild. I did hear once that there was madness in the family. And now I find you, too, looking happier than I have ever seen you since this tedious engagement."

"Would it distress you very much, my dear father, to hear that the engagement is at an end?"

"That entirely depends on circumstances, my dear Emily. If you did not regret it, I am sure I should not do so. I have been too grieved by your low spirits and pale cheeks lately; and your mother wanted to persuade me that it was all caused by Sir Frederick's coldness; but I did not believe her. I felt sure that the cause of my darling's distress was a very different one; and my conscience smote me for the share I had in your engagement. I shall be too happy now if you are honourably released. Tell me all this strange mystery."

"There is not much to tell, papa. Sir Frederick has confided to me that he made a mistake when he honoured me with his proposals; and I ——, I released him from his bondage, and he was so happy!"

"Your story does not hang well together, Emily; but I can guess. Yes, I think I see further than your mother does, blind as she calls me; but I will not insist on hearing your secret before you choose to tell me, or some one else does so for you. Shall I ask our old friend, Charles Vernon, to dine with us to-day?"

"Dear papa!" was all that his happy daughter could reply. She pressed his arm, gladdened his heart by a look of unrepressed joy, and then ran into the house to hide her confusion.

The General followed slowly, and went straight to his wife's boudoir, half amused, and half frightened, to tell her that her castles had fallen to the ground.

Vernon, little conjecturing the happiness in store for him, first refused the invitation; then repented, and recalled the orderly.

Six o'clock came, and with a trembling step

he entered the little drawing-room. Emily was there alone. Of what passed in the quarter of an hour before the General interrupted them, there remains no record.

But his daughter's eyes were overflowing with tears of happiness, and Vernon returned his old friend's grasp with a fervour that needed no further explanation.

Mrs. Vivian then sailed into the room, and for the first time her daughter scarcely regarded her dissatisfaction.

The happy hours flew past, and when at last Vernon tore himself away and returned to his quarters, he could not retire to rest until he had relieved himself by the following letter to his sister.

"Citadel, Plymouth.

"My dear Harriet,

"I hope I am not in a delicious dream, to wake in my former misery. Emily Vivian is released from her engagement to that puppy, Myers; the swine has rejected the pearl. O!! I am too happy!

"The dear old General has given his consent,

and Emily —— but I will not now repeat how she has forgiven all my past sins.

" God bless my dear Harriet! Tell O'Halloran to bring you over here — I want you both to rejoice with me.

" Ever yours,

" CHARLES VERNON."

Emily Vivian to Harriet O'Halloran.

" My dearest Harriet,

" Charles tells me that he wrote to you last night, and told you of your friend's deliverance. Come to us directly. Mama desires me to say that she has a spare bed-room for you. We shall have such delightful walks together, and we must teach you to ride.

" Your brother, who is sitting on the other side of the table, looking over my Jamaica sketch-book, tells me that he has a gentle, beautiful horse, a rival to dear Busaco. I am to try him to-morrow, and explore Mount Edgecombe. Pray come quickly; our happiness is incomplete without you.

" Ever yours,

" EMILY VIVIAN."

Perhaps there is no period of our checkered existence so free from the dross of care as that which precedes such a marriage. It is the holiday of the spring-time of life, delusive, it is true, for then all seems bright and beautiful; the certain sorrows and disappointments of human life are unforeseen. It is an oasis in the desert.

Another, but a very different pair of engaged lovers were also enjoying themselves in their own way, under the same fleeting influences.

Fanny Fairfield had now nearly attained the object of all her schemes. Her wedding-day was fixed, and the Morning Post had announced "That it was believed that Sir Frederick Myers, Bart., of Oak Hall, Yorkshire, and Grosvenor Square, London, would soon lead to the altar the beautiful and accomplished Miss Fairfield, only daughter of Richard Fairfield, Esq., of Holly Hill."

The heroine of the paragraph was sitting in her boudoir at Holly Hill, looking like some fairy's favourite who had received a gift of pearls and diamonds. The table was covered with wedding presents; little caskets, contain-

ing gold chains, brooches, and ear-rings, lay open, and Sir Frederick Myers stood beside, criticising each pretty toy. He made her try the effect of a diamond aigrette in her black hair, or clasped a bracelet round her tiny wrist.

"I can never wear this," she said, as she put down a bracelet, of peculiarly fine workmanship, the clasp of which was set with diamonds. "It is very beautiful, as all your presents are, Frederick; but how could you so forget the size of my wrist? See, it falls off."

"And yet," said Sir Frederick, off his guard, "it was so much too small that it hurt the wrist that it was intended for."

Fanny Fairfield coloured, and pushed away the bracelet. "I won't have it!" she said, and, for an instant, she almost looked ill-tempered; but she soon resumed her smiles, took up the bracelet again, and said,

"Why not send it to Miss Vivian? it would be such a pretty present; and I could not keep it now that I know its history, even if it fitted me. Do, Freddy, send it with

a pretty note. I am sure that the poor girl must now be repenting her folly, and this might help to console her. How little did she know what she lost!" and Fanny looked first at Sir Frederick, and then at her glittering presents.

"How kind of you, Fanny! Yes, I should like to send it to her, only you know that I hate writing: I should not know what to say."

"Oh, you are only too lazy. You do every thing better than any body else when once you try."

Sir Frederick, thus urged, took a sheet of paper and dated his letter; but he could get no further, and he looked up in helpless perplexity.

"Oh! you naughty man," said Fanny, "you won't take the trouble. Give me the pen, and I will write it for you. You can copy it afterwards."

Sir Frederick stood and looked over her shoulder, playing with her chain, as his eyes followed her hand.

" Holly Hill, July.

" My dear Miss Vivian,

" Pray accept the congratulations of an old friend on your approaching happiness.

" You know how ready I was to sacrifice any selfish wishes as soon as I discovered that the affections which I had so valued were given to a happier man."

" Stop, Fanny! how can you write so? You know it is not true."

" Be quiet, Freddy; it reads prettily. Do be quiet, and let me go on."

" You will have heard, no doubt, that I am about to follow your example, and the lady of my choice is doing all that she can to console me. Shall I have any chance of introducing Lady Myers to you in London? I wish it could be in the country, but the old Hall is pulled down, and the new mansion is on so large a scale that it will take years to complete it; but I am new furnishing our house in Grosvenor Square.

" I have ventured to offer you a memorial

of the past. Pray accept it: it will sometimes remind you of your sincere friend,

"FREDERICK MYERS."

"There!—now copy it. I do almost pity the poor girl; but she cannot know the happiness that she has forfeited."

"Or all that I have gained, my dearest Fanny; but I would not send that letter, only that I cannot think of any thing else to put in it."

About this time Major Vernon received the following letter from Colonel Sanchez: —

"Grenada.

"My dear Vernon,

"My forebodings when we parted at Demerara were prophetic. I rejoined the remnant of my regiment at St. Leon de Caraccas only to suffer renewed defeat.

"Your British Auxiliary Legion have completed what a weak government and procrastinated resistance had rendered an easy task. I did not quit the royal standard until the issue

of the war was decided, and then wounds and ill health compelled me to return to Spain.

"I shall not seek employment again under the government which now rules my unhappy country. I am sick of civil war, and while French interest prevails I see no hope for Spain; but enough of this unhappy subject.

"You will rejoice to hear that my private happiness is secured. My dear Antonia is now my wife; and the death of her uncle, the late Bishop of Toledo, has made us comparatively rich. I have hung up my sword in my old hall, beside that of the founder of our race, Don Alonzo Sanchez, who fought in the wars of Charles the Fifth, and I am now almost a civilian.

"Carlos has followed my fortunes, and when he marries my wife's waiting woman, Leonora, he is to keep the posada on the Madrid road, and recount his adventures (what lies he will tell) to the muleteers. I told him that I intended writing to you, and he begs me to assure your Excellency of his devotion, and wishes to know whether the plumb-pudding tree is still plentiful in England; he would like some seeds.

My dear Antonia sends her best love to the preserver of her husband's life.

"Your sincere friend,

"JUAN SANCHEZ."

"P. S. — I had almost forgotten to reassure your sensitive conscience, by telling you that I have found means to remit to our friend, the corregidor of Aragu, the money which I borrowed from him — expressing at the same time Captain Vernon's regret that circumstances prevented his completing his order for the saddles and bridles.

"J. S."

Charles Vernon and Emily Vivian were married at the little church of Eggbuckland, and continued to reside at Myrtle Lodge, until Bonaparte's escape from Elba again plunged Europe into war.

Major Vernon accompanied his regiment to Belgium, and shared in the glories, and escaped unhurt from Waterloo. At the close of that fearful day, he led his regiment in the memorable final charge, for his Lieutenant-colonel had

fallen early in the day, killed by a cannon shot while standing beside him in one of the unbreakable squares.

He succeeded to the Lieutenant-colonelcy; but retired on half-pay on his regiment's being ordered to India.

Major O'Halloran soon afterwards also retired from active service; he had succeeded to property in Ireland, and he was too conscientious to be a permanent absentee.

The house at Myrtle Lodge, now General Vivian's property, was enlarged, and for several years Colonel Vernon and Emily spent some months there every summer.

Six years after their marriage they were childless, but a fair girl about seven years old was playing on the lawn with Harriet O'Halloran's eldest boy, Hector, whom she was taught to call cousin. The beautiful child's name was Julia.

THE END.

LONDON:
SPOTTISWOODE and SHAW,
New-street-Square.

WORKS IN GENERAL LITERATURE.

I.

MADAME DE MALGUET: a Tale of 1820. 3 vols. post 8vo. 31*s.* 6*d.*

II.

SAVINDROOG; or, THE QUEEN OF THE JUNGLE. By CAPTAIN RAFTER. 3 vols. post 8vo. 31*s.* 6*d.*

III.

THE PRIVATEER'S-MAN ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO. By CAPTAIN MARRYAT, C. B., Author of "PETER SIMPLE." 2 vols. fcp. 8vo. 12*s.*

IV.

THE SETTLERS IN CANADA. By CAPTAIN MARRYAT, C. B., Author of "PETER SIMPLE." New Edition. Fcp. 8vo. 7*s.* 6*d.*

V.

THE MISSION; or, SCENES IN AFRICA. By CAPTAIN MARRYAT, C. B., Author of "PETER SIMPLE." 2 vols. fcp. 8vo. 12*s.*

VI.

MASTERMAN READY; or, THE WRECK OF THE PACIFIC. By CAPTAIN MARRYAT, C. B., Author of "PETER SIMPLE." 3 vols. fcp. 8vo. 22*s.* 6*d.*

VII.

THE FOUNTAIN OF ARETHUSA. By ROBERT EYRES LANDOR, M. A., Author of "THE FAWN OF SERTORIUS." 2 vols. post 8vo.

VIII.

THE FAWN OF SERTORIUS. By ROBERT EYRES LANDOR, M. A., Author of "THE FOUNTAIN OF ARETHUSA." 2 vols. post 8vo. 18*s.*

IX.

PERICLES: a Tale of Athens in the 83d Olympiad. By the Author of "A BRIEF SKETCH OF GREEK PHILOSOPHY." 2 vols. post 8vo. 18*s.*

X.

LADY WILLOUGHBY'S DIARY (1635 to 1648). New Edition. Square fcp. 8vo. 8*s.*; morocco, 18*s.*

XI.

LADY WILLOUGHBY'S DIARY (1648 to 1663). New Edition. Square fcp. 8vo. 8*s.*; morocco, 18*s.*

XII.

MIDSUMMER EVE: a Fairy Tale of Love. By Mrs. S. C. HALL. With Illustrations by STANFIELD, LANDSEER, and CRESWICK. Square crown 8vo. 21*s.*

XIII.

TWELVE YEARS AGO: a Tale. By the Author of "LETTERS TO MY UNKNOWN FRIENDS." Fcp. 8vo. 6*s.* 6*d.*

XIV.

THE DOCTOR, &c. By the late ROBERT SOUTHEY. Complete in One Volume. Edited by the Rev. J. W. WARTER. With Portrait, Vignette, and Bust. Square crown 8vo. 21*s.*

XV.

ROBERT SOUTHEY'S POETICAL WORKS. Complete in One Volume, uniform with THOMAS MOORE'S. With Portrait and Vignette. 8vo. 21*s.*; morocco, 42*s.*

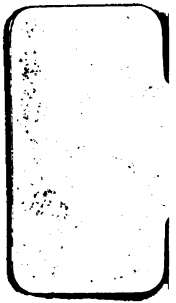
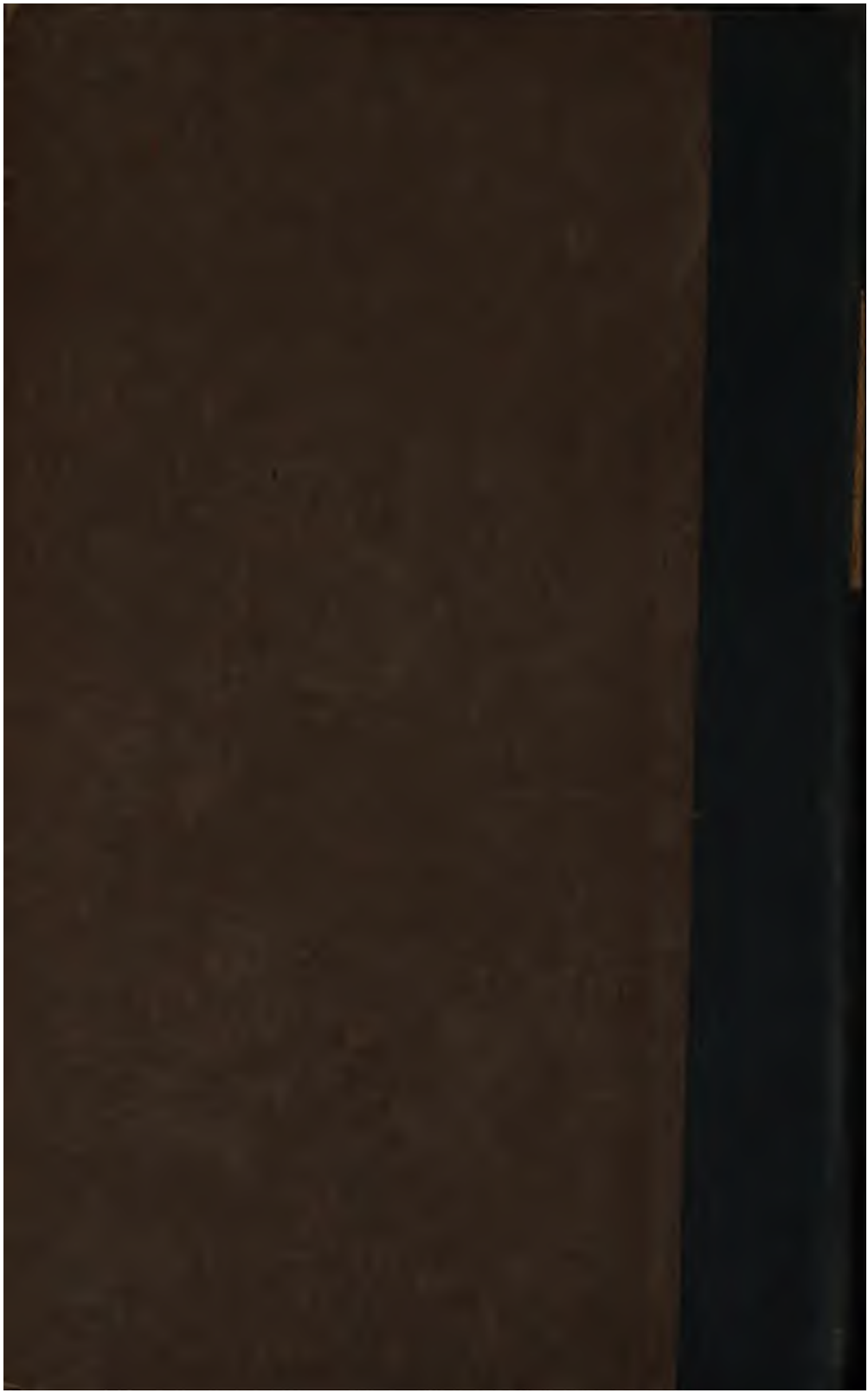
XVI.

THOMAS MOORE'S POETICAL WORKS. Complete in One Volume, uniform with ROBERT SOUTHEY'S. With Portrait and Vignette. 8vo. 21*s.*; morocco, 42*s.*

XVII.

THE POETS' PLEASAUNCE; or, GARDEN OF PLEASANT FLOWERS. By EDEN WARWICK. With beautiful Illustrations. Square crown 8vo. 30*s.*; morocco, 45*s.*

XVIII.

DUNLOP'S HISTORY OF FICTION. New Edition, complete in One Volume. 8vo. 15*s.*

LONDON: LONGMAN, BROWN, GREEN, and LONGMANS.